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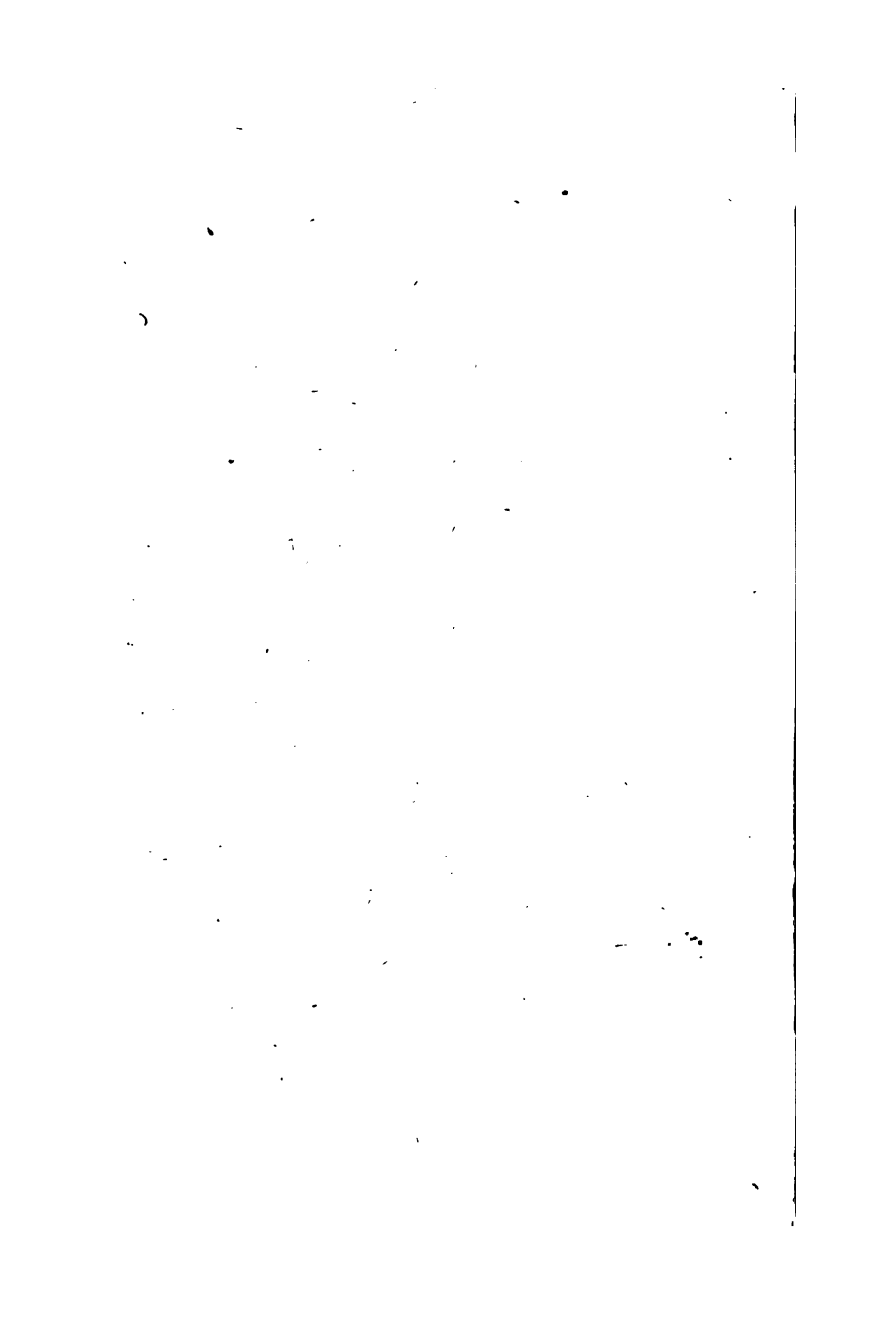
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LETTERS
TO THE
REV. STEPHEN REMINGTON,
IN REVIEW OF HIS
LECTURES ON UNIVERSALISM,

First published in the Universalist Union.

*Thomas
P. Price*
BY T. J. SAWYER.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

The following letters originally appeared, at successive periods, in the columns of the Universalist Union. As this little volume may fall into the hands of some who did not see the letters in the form in which they were first presented to the public, a brief statement of the circumstances which called them forth, may be necessary here.

In the month of February, 1837, Rev. Mr. Hatfield, of the Seventh Presbyterian Church, in New York, took occasion to lecture on the subject of Universalism, from the text—Romans vi. 23 :—“ The wages of sin is death,” &c. This lecture was replied to by Rev. T. J. Sawyer, in the Orchard street Church, in a discourse from the same text, which was afterwards published in the Universalist Union of March 25, 1837, and subsequently issued in a pamphlet, entitled—“ The Penalty of Sin.”

A copy of the Union, containing the Sermon, was conveyed to Rev. Stephen Remington, then pastor of the Willet street Church, by one of his congregation, with a request that he should notice it in his pulpit. With this request Mr. Remington complied, in three lectures, on three successive Sunday evenings. An experienced Reporter was employed, but from some unavoidable circumstances, but imperfect notes were obtained of the first lecture—the second and third were obtained in full. In the progress of their delivery, however, the Trustees of the Willet street Church, and particularly the “ Young Men of the congregation,” became much interested in the lectures, and strongly impressed with the great good they were doing in pulling down the strong holds of Universalism, and were anxious to extend these benefits to the world at large. Meetings were held, the lectures applauded, for their “ original, lucid and scriptural” arguments, and unanimous resolutions passed, requesting their immediate publication to “ counteract the delusive error” of Universalism. At their close, Mr. Sawyer respectfully requested a copy of the lectures, for the purpose of replying to them. He was informed that the author was actively engaged in preparing them for the press, and that they would be out in a week or two, when a printed copy would be cheerfully furnished. It was

deemed advisable to wait for a certified copy, instead of using the stenographic notes.

Week after week passed, but no book appeared. It was understood that they were put immediately in the hands of the printer—the first lecture printed, or nearly so; and then, there was an unaccountable suspension in the work. Some said that the copy was withdrawn—that the rigor of the Methodist discipline would allow no preacher to publish any thing to the world unless it had first received the approbation of the Book Committee, [a kind of Censorship,] or of a Conference. Be this as it may, the second and third lectures, as published, bear evident marks of “a change” having “come over their spirit,” when compared with the notes as they were delivered.

The book at length appeared—after some eight or ten weeks—and a copy was kindly furnished Mr. Sawyer, who reviewed it in several lectures on successive Sunday evenings, during the winter following. It was intended, immediately at the close of Mr. Sawyer's review, in his church, to have published in the Union, Mr. Remington's lectures, as he delivered them, that the public might compare them with the book; but a long period of sickness with the writer of this article, defeated this purpose; and after the unavoidable delay, it was deemed best to omit them entirely.

It may be thought, by many, that Mr. Remington's labors have received more attention than they were entitled to. They undoubtedly have, more than they intrinsically deserved—far more than they could claim, as they were first delivered. But they are sent forth to the world under the seal and patronage of the Trustees of the Willet street Church, and “the Young Men” of that “congregation;” and beside, bear marks of foreign aid, and may be regarded as embodying a considerable part of the argument and abuse of the whole Methodist denomination against Universalism. All these considerations seem to entitle them to a more particular examination than they would otherwise merit.

It was Mr. Sawyer's first intention merely to glance at some of the leading points of the lectures, in a few letters, through the Union, and close the subject, but he has continued them along, at his leisure, till they number twenty-two letters. If their publication in the paper, and in this form, shall tend to explode error, and advance christian truth, their object will have been accomplished.

New-York, May, 1839.

THE PUBLISHER.

LETTERS

TO REV. STEPHEN REMINGTON, IN REVIEW OF HIS LECTURES ON
UNIVERSALISM.

LETTER I.

Dear Sir—Several months have elapsed since you delivered in your church, and subsequently published, a series of Lectures on Universalism. As you had the kindness to present me a copy of these discourses, I feel under some obligations to express my candid opinion of their merits. I regret, however, that circumstances have hitherto prevented me from performing this duty to you and the cause of divine truth. But much of my time has been otherwise occupied, and besides, I have, till recently, been unable to obtain a particular volume, which, as it seems to have contributed largely to the Lectures before me, I deemed almost indispensable to one who should attempt their examination.

The subject which you, sir, have seen fit to discuss, is I believe among the most momentous in the world, and is possessed of an interest the most thrilling. I know not what question should command the candid attention of every reflecting mind, if it be not that which relates to the unending happiness or misery of the human race. The temporal interests of communities, the destiny of states and empires, and even the fortunes of the whole world from its commencement to its termination, dwindle into insignificance when compared with the weal or wo of one immortal spirit. "What in the eye of an intellectual and omnipotent Being," said Coleridge, "is the whole sidereal system to the soul of one man for whom Christ died?" And if the spiritual so infinitely transcends the physical, the interests of eternity must equally surpass those of time. He, therefore, who comes to discuss the prospects of a single soul for

eternity, should first be impressed with the magnitude of his subject. But when he throws the eternal interests of a world into doubt, and begins to question whether countless millions of the human race shall not, ultimately, be miserable beyond degree, and without end, it seems to me he must be made of sterner stuff than ordinarily falls to the lot of humanity, if he does not feel that his subject is invested with an awfulness, which forbids not merely lightness and trifling, but every thing that is inconsistent with the deepest concern. For, flatter ourselves as we may, it is, I should hope, impossible for any man even to glance at this question, without yielding to the conviction that he is personally interested in its answer. He may if he can, bar all doubt of his own salvation; but has he no kindred, no friends, no "neighbor" whom he loves as himself, for whose eternal welfare he is solicitous? Are there none of all his race with whom he sympathizes, and whose happiness or misery bears directly and powerfully upon his own? It has been well said by a divine of our own country, "that the whole human family is woven together, in every direction, by the ties of consanguinity, the bonds of friendship, the cords of love; so that no individual can suffer, without involving many in his wretchedness. We were made social creatures; and so strong is this connexion, strengthened and confirmed in so many ways, that it must lift the whole race to heaven, or draw it down to hell. Whatever be its final destiny, it must be shared by the whole." I have no occasion, at present, to urge the conclusion which is here drawn from the consideration of man's social nature, but it is well for us ever to keep our various and most intimate relations with mankind in view when discussing their prospects for an everlasting felicity or wretchedness. Had this been more generally observed, we have reason to think that a different tone and temper would have distinguished much that has been written on the subject of man's final destiny. Instead of manifesting a kind of gratification on making out a convincing or probable argument in favor of the doctrine of endless misery, as we have not unfrequently witnessed, the advocate of a doctrine so little consonant with the dictates of humanity, would show some tokens of regret and sorrow at the conclusion which he felt himself compelled to draw. The celebrated English divine, Dr. Barrow, tells us that in his time "it was nothing, in one

breath, to damn whole churches ; at one push to throw down whole nations into the bottomless pit." At present it is almost a matter of glorying if one can, even with the show of probability, damn half of the human species ; and what is most unaccountable, is, that the splendor and joy of the triumph is scarcely lessened though it be obtained at the risk of one's own eternal well being, and at the sacrifice of his best hopes for many who are among the dearest and most cherished objects of his affection on earth !

I offer these remarks for your consideration, sir, because I find on the very first page of your book, a sentiment that deserves nothing less than unqualified reprobation. I allude to the letter of your friend Amos Belden, which is introduced to grace your little work and perhaps to commend it to the hands and hearts of your Methodist brethren. I must be permitted to quote a part of this commendatory epistle, that the reader may judge whether my censure be just. Mr. Belden says—

" Rev. and Dear Sir—Having had the pleasure of listening to your sermons on Universalism recently delivered in the Willet street church, to crowded and delighted audiences, my own convictions of the originality and conclusiveness of the arguments there presented, induce me to express the opinion that their publication would promote the cause of truth and righteousness."

Of the "originality" exhibited in your Lectures I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. The "conclusiveness of the arguments there presented," I will for a moment concede. But what was the object of these conclusive arguments ? I reply, to disprove the doctrine of the final holiness and happiness of all men, and to establish the opinion that all who have died, or shall die, impenitent and unbelievers in Jesus Christ, shall be endlessly miserable. And to this point your arguments were *conclusive*. And yet your warm and zealous christian friend, Mr. Belden, speaks of "having had the PLEASURE of listening" to you, and of your delivering your lectures "to crowded and DELIGHTED audiences." What a subject to excite pleasure and delight in the bosom of a christian congregation ! Had your lectures been delivered in pandemonium, it might have been reasonably expected that the prominent views there advanced would produce a most sensible pleasure, a most thrilling

delight. To the arch-fiend, and to all from him downwards through every grade of malignant spirits in that world of poetic fancy, the great leading truth set forth with so much originality and conclusiveness of argument in your little volume, that Satan is forever to divide the empire with the Almighty, and that the Son of God died for millions in vain, must doubtless have come as tidings of victory. There might have been a "*delighted* audience," and more than one no doubt could have spoken of "*the pleasure* of listening." But of a congregation of christians, of those born again, begotten of God, of love, of those who have been taught to love even their enemies, and to pray for their worst foes; o' such persons being pleased, delighted with such conclusions as those at which you arrived, I can form no conception. It seems to me utterly and forever impossible. That Mr. Belden was gratified is certainly within the limits of thought, and that there were others in your audience who sympathized with him is quite possible. But how much of common humanity, to say nothing of christian sympathy and benevolence, was exhibited in that gratification, I leave you to decide. Still I cannot withhold a frank avowal of my astonishment that such a sentiment should find so conspicuous a place in your volume, and obtain even your tacit approbation. I am pained to see a spirit thus exhibited which is at so infinite a remove from all the dictates of christianity. If you believe the doctrine of endless misery, as an honest man preach it, and preach it faithfully, but in the name of all that is sacred and benevolent, let us never hear an expression from mortal lips on this subject that savors of gratification, or indicates the slightest emotion of pleasure and delight.

I am glad that you do not sympathize with many of your brethren in an affected contempt of the doctrine of Universalism. On this point you have spoken in your preface in a manner that I can fully approve. You say—

"I am fully aware that there are various and conflicting opinions on the subject of religious controversy.—Some think that there are errors prevalent in our day which ought not to be noticed in so formal a manner, lest by so doing we make them prominent and popular; but I have not so learned religious obligation. The faithful servant of God is set for the defence of the gospel, and it

is his imperative duty to expose all dangerous heresies and earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. To omit this is to omit his duty, and to be an unworthy watchman upon the walls of Zion. Universalism I believe to be a very insinuating and dangerous doctrine. It is to be feared that it has ruined souls both in time and eternity. It may ruin more; and it doubtless will unless its progress be arrested. Upon this subject I fear we have already been too long silent. While we have been sleeping on our posts the enemy has been diligently sowing his tares. The minds of many of our youth have been poisoned and corrupted by this deadly opiate. And shall we still continue silent. God forbid! Let us lift up our voice like a trumpet, and sound an alarm. Let us cry aloud and spare not. Let us persevere, and never give up the contest till God shall crown our efforts with complete and triumphant victory."

This I like. It is valiant; it is right. If you believe Universalism to be an insinuating and dangerous doctrine; if you think it has ruined souls in time and eternity, and that it will ruin more; if the minds of many of our youth are poisoned and corrupted by it, and the poison is still spreading, your duty, and the duty of every man who agrees with you in your opinions and fears, is very plain. You must expose and refute it.

But you suggest that some of your brethren are unwilling to notice Universalism in a formal manner, lest by so doing they should make it prominent and popular. Be it so; the policy is obviously bad, since it manacles the hand that should be free to resist every encroachment of fatal error. You have well said that upon the subject of Universalism you and your brethren have already been too long silent. But bad as this policy is, it is the best the case admits. I am, therefore, not inclined to yield implicit credence to the pretension that Universalism is so contemptible as to deserve no formal notice, or that it possesses so peculiar a character, that although as false as perjury, it is destined to gain victories in an open encounter, or under a full examination. Can you persuade yourself, sir, that your brethren are so far behind their age as to believe that truth is likely to be the loser in a grapple with error? Were they confident of wielding "the sword of the spirit," they

would have no occasion to shun religious controversy, and least of all would they shield themselves under the affected fear of making falsehood popular by exposing it. No, sir, there are some among you who well know the danger of examining Universalism. They are fully aware that the best mode of staying its progress is to represent it as unworthy of notice, to speak of it as very insinuating and very dangerous, and thus to bring into discredit and contempt what it would be unsafe to examine. Whether you have been altogether judicious in assailing this "dangerous doctrine," time alone can determine, but you certainly deserve praise for your zeal, though it be not wholly according to knowledge. Better undoubtedly it would be for the cause of truth were your brethren to follow your example. Rest assured, sir, Universalists have no fears for the result.

Hereafter I shall trouble you with occasional remarks upon your lectures. Do not understand, however, that I am to subject every argument you have introduced to a rigid examination. There are reasons which must excuse me from assuming so ungrateful a task.

Meanwhile I remain yours, &c.

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER II.

Dear Sir—While I commend you for openly attacking Universalism, if you believe it to be so insinuating and dangerous as you represent it, I cannot withhold my approbation of the course of conduct pursued by your immediate friends, and particularly by the members of your society. Your lectures were delivered at the instance of one of your own church, and were published by request of the board of your Trustees, of a large meeting of the young men of your congregation, and of Mr. Amos Belden. Seldom indeed has any thing against Universalism been issued from the press with so wide an approval. It is true, your zealous Trustees solicited them for publication before they were all delivered, but that circumstance only shows the unbounded confidence which they reposed in your ability, and "the pleasure and delight" they anticipated you would diffuse by giving them to the public. But the zeal of your young men is deserving of all praise, and I cannot resist the temptation to insert here the most important part of their

proceedings. Here follow the preamble and resolutions which they passed :

“ We the young men of this church and congregation, believing the doctrine of Universalism to be both a dangerous and fatal error ; that its propagation can do no good, but much evil ; that many (especially the young) have been, and still are, deluded by it, in consequence of which their salvation has been prevented, and many souls forever ruined ; and believing that the lectures recently preached in this church against said doctrine by the Rev. Stephen Remington are calculated to counteract the influence of this delusive error, and, we hope, convince the unconvinced of its fallacy, and prevent many from falling under its deceptive influence—Therefore,

Resolved, That we express our heartfelt gratitude to our beloved pastor for the original, lucid and scriptural refutation of the doctrine of Universalism preached to us in a course of lectures on the last three Sabbath evenings

Resolved, That in our opinion it is very desirable to have these lectures published, believing as we do that their publication would be a lasting benefit to the moral interests of mankind.”

For the zeal and promptness of your young men in seconding so cordially your exertions against the insinuating and fatal error of Universalism, I feel high respect. Were there more of it in the religious world, I should not only be better pleased, but should be induced to yield a more ready credence to the professions of the advocates of endless misery. But the knowledge they exhibit in this preamble and these resolutions does not I presume equal their zeal. They talk of Universalism as though they were familiar with it, and yet it may be reasonably doubted if they know any thing more of it than you have communicated in these lectures. It may be reasonably doubted whether five of the whole number ever read a Universalist work, even the sermon which called forth your lectures, in their lives. Still they have no hesitation in expressing their belief that it has prevented the salvation of many, and ruined souls forever ! They believe that the preaching of it can do no good, but much evil. But there is something almost amusing in the manner they speak of your “ original, lucid and scriptural re-

fulatton of the doctrine of Universalism." Very grateful no doubt it is to feel conscious of deserving such praise; but unmerited commendation looks too much like flattery to be pleasing to an enlarged and noble mind.

I must in honesty confess, sir, that I have met in the perusal of your book with some painful disappointments. It has not fully answered my expectations, although I never indulged in those which bordered on the impossible or the extravagant. Your friends spoke of the originality of your arguments, and of your original refutation of Universalism. Had they read half as many works against Universalism, as I have found it in the way of my duty to do, they would probably have omitted this part of their commendation. Yet it would gratify me much to see an original argument against this doctrine. Truly refreshing would it be to my mind to be taxed with the exciting labor of examining some new view, or of solving some new difficulty. It is tiresome almost beyond expression to be under the necessity of answering again and again, not only for "seventy times seven," but for seven hundred times seventy, stale objections to the universality of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. But so it is; and I must be indebted to the keener perception of your friends for the traces of originality in the lectures before me.

But if I have been disappointed in seeking for originality, I have not succeeded better in another respect. In your preface you tell us that "in preparing these lectures you have availed yourself of help from every source within your reach." The very announcement awoke expectation. Universalism has for the last twenty or thirty years been considerably discussed in the United States.—Many volumes have appeared on both sides of the question, and are easily obtained. Some learning and much labor have been expended in assailing and defending the doctrine under consideration. These sources are within the reach of every one who will avail himself of their proffered aid. Judge of my astonishment then, when on reading your lectures, your boasted "help from every source within your reach," was discovered to be drawn, freely it is true, but exclusively from *three or four solitary authors!* And these, it may be observed, are all ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Whether Edwards, and Strong, and Fuller, and Stuart,

and Ely, and others of the same character are beyond your reach, I am unable to say, but of this I feel confident, that they have not contributed, directly at least, to the treasury of "things new and old" from which you have drawn. Perhaps the Calvinism of these authors unfitted them for rendering you any aid: perhaps, too, you were not so familiar with them as to make them easily serviceable. But it is vain to speculate. The fact I think will not be disputed, that Timothy Merritt, Dr. Fisk and Luther Lee, with a single sermon by O. Scott, constitute the only sources whence you have derived any considerable aid, or to whom you acknowledge yourself under obligations.

But if your reading was so limited on your own side of the question, it appears to have been still more so on the part of the doctrine which you attacked. I have read your work with due attention and care, and hitherto I have sought in vain for a single trace that would lead one to suspect that you had ever read more on the side of Universalism than one solitary sermon, "THE PENALTY OF SIN," so called, which was made the occasion, as well as, in a manner, the object of your late attack. This circumstance I regard as most unfortunate. When a man is about to write or preach against the opinions of any sect of christians or set of men, he is undoubtedly at liberty to "avail himself of help from every source within his reach," or to select one or two favorite authors, or to reject them all with contempt. One is under no obligations to borrow from his predecessors. But it seems to me he is not entirely free from obligation to make himself tolerably well acquainted with the opinions which he attempts to refute. The wise man hath said, "he that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame to him." It avails nothing to explode an opinion which no one holds. It is rank injustice, to mis-represent, either through culpable ignorance or ill design, the doctrines of a sect or the sentiments of an individual. Nor is it safe to rely explicitly on the testimony of opposers for information on such a subject. I do not doubt that Mr. Merritt and Mr. Lee and Dr. Fisk are men of respectable talents and attainments; but I do very much doubt their qualifications for giving an impartial exposition of Universalism.—Yet it is to them you seem to be indebted for almost all you know on the subject. Of the writings of Universalists themselves you

have read indeed one sermon! And this is the *Ultima Thule*, so far at least as your lectures give any token, of your investigations among the most legitimate sources. I would express my astonishment at such a proceeding, were it not a matter of so common occurrence with the opposers of the truth of God, that it has ceased to astonish. Were I to assail the doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church, you would probably think it incumbent on me first to acquaint myself with them—and that not by the means of common fame, nor from the representations of avowed opposers, but by consulting your own standard writers. The golden rule I leave you to apply yourself. I am, sir,

Yours, &c.

THOS. J. SAWYER.

LETTER III.

Dear Sir—Your lectures appear to be a reply to a sermon written by myself, and entitled 'THE PENALTY OF SIN.' I cannot therefore but feel some little surprise at the space you occupy, and still more at the method you adopt in order to refute the opinions advanced in that discourse. Is it indeed, sir, so difficult a task to prove the doctrine of endless misery? Does it require so much labor to refute a single argument of Universalism?

The Sermon to which you have offered a reply was certainly not designed to darken counsel, or to involve the subject on which it treated in difficulties. On the contrary, it was my earnest endeavor to present it in a plain and intelligible manner, and I flatter myself that my efforts were not altogether unsuccessful.

The text had just before been employed by the Rev. Mr. Hatfield for the purpose of proving that the penalty of sin was eternal death, or in other words, endless misery. Undoubtedly, if this doctrine makes a part of revelation, our text must be regarded as one of its chief supports. This seems to be conceded on all sides. If the Bible, then, teaches that the penalty of the divine law is eternal death, Romans vi. 23, must prove it. If this passage does not prove it, it cannot be proved from the volume of inspiration, and is therefore not entitled to our belief. The question, therefore, which was discussed in the sermon to which you have replied, seems to me a most weighty and important one, viz., Can the doctrine that

eternal death is the penalty of God's law be proved from Rom. vi. 23?

I indulged the hope that should any one attempt a refutation of that sermon, he would confine himself to the question at issue. If God has indeed threatened man with endless misery, it is to be presumed that it can be shown from the divine word. You ought to be able to place your finger on the passage which contains such an awful menace.

I am aware, and your lectures show that you are also aware, that this is not so easily done. You have not, and I presume that you dare not, hazard your cause by a simple and single appeal to the Scriptures. You know that you cannot prove the doctrine which you advocate, from the text that you have placed at the head of your lectures. Had it been otherwise, it would not have required such a volume as you have furnished us, to have refuted the plain and unsophisticated argument contained in my sermon. It would not have been necessary for you to have traversed the whole field of controversy between Universalists and Limitarians; you would not have found it convenient to discuss subjects so irrelevant as are many of those which help to make out your book.—The simple question is "*Can you prove from Romans vi. 23, or any other passage or passages of the divine record, that eternal death is the penalty of sin?*" If you can accomplish this, your work is done, and the controversy between Universalists and Limitarians is ended.

But what is the method which you were pleased to adopt? It is one very well calculated to mislead your auditors and readers, a method by which the main question—the only question, was carefully kept out of sight, while you were displaying your prowess in the miraculous defeat of all opposers in every other quarter. You abandoned the very citadel of Limitarianism, if any citadel it has, that you might carry a few of the most unimportant outworks of Universalism—outworks, too, which you could not retain when they were yours, and which were perfectly useless while in your possession. Such has been the success of your arms! But let us glance at the method of your argument.

In your first lecture you attempt to harmonize the existence of moral and natural evil with the administration of the moral gov-

ernment of God. You attempt to contrast the views entertained by Universalists on this subject with your own, and show at least to your own satisfaction, that Universalist opinions are utterly erroneous and indeed shockingly blasphemous. But did it ever occur to you, sir, to ask yourself what all this has to do with the subject before you? Suppose that Universalists do err egregiously in their views of the origin of moral evil, and that they cannot harmonize the existence of such evil with the moral government of God, does that prove that man is threatened by his Maker with eternal death? Does it furnish even a presumption against the final holiness and happiness of all mankind? Suppose that you could establish the Wesleyan doctrine of *free will* or *free moral agency*, and could prove that Universalists embrace undisguised *fatalism*, would this help your interpretation of Romans vi. 23? or would it furnish a particle of evidence that God has threatened man with endless misery? I must confess that I see no connexion between these subjects. And yet your first lecture is wholly employed in this way.

But I will give you credit for more discrimination than these remarks would seem to imply. You very well knew that your first lecture, although it had nothing to do with the text which you placed at its head, or with the sermon to which you were avowedly replying, was still a very important part of your labor. It gave you an opportunity of holding up Universalism and Universalists in a ridiculous if not an abhorrent light, and that was better for your cause than the best argument at your command. Some of your misrepresentations of our faith I shall find opportunity to expose hereafter, but for the present let us confine ourselves to your method of reasoning.

In your second lecture you attempt to reconcile "endless death—the full penalty of the divine law, or punishment of sin—with the administration of God," and to show it to be scriptural. Would it not have been a better arrangement, sir, to have shown it to be scripturally true in the first place, and then if necessary have reconciled it with the government of God? But let us glance at the particular steps of your argument. After having premised that the penalty of sin is in the text and other passages of scripture called *death*, you attempt to show,

"First, That this penalty of the law of God which is

the proper punishment of sin, has not been nor is it fully executed in this life upon the transgressor.

Second, That this inevitable penalty will be executed upon the finally impenitent in a future state of existence.

Third, That its execution will result in their endless punishment."

There is something rather curious in this arrangement of your labor. It may have been the best for your cause that could be adopted, but I cannot think it the most ready way to attain the truth.— If you can prove that the penalty of sin is endless death, let this be done, and done at once. The advantages of such a course are, it appears to me, numerous, and of a character to command attention. Instead, however, of attempting the main question, you very shrewdly undertake in your first proposition to show that the penalty of the law of God has not been, nor is it fully executed in this life upon the transgressor. Why not first prove, sir, that the penalty of the law of God is endless death, and then it will be unnecessary to prove that it is not inflicted in this life. With all their ignorance and stupidity, you will find no Universalists who would be anxious to contend against you that endless death is suffered in time!

But suppose I should grant, as many Universalists are quite ready to do, that your first proposition is true, how far I ask would that advance you toward your grand conclusion? Would it furnish any proof that the penalty of sin is eternal death? I can very well conceive of future punishment without being forced to believe in endless misery. But let us glance at the management of your first proposition. To evolve the truth which you suppose it contains; you take the following positions:

"1. The punishment of the first sin was threatened to be death. God said to Adam. 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' Gen. ii. 17.

2. This threatening was not executed upon man to the uttermost in the day on which he sinned, but was suspended for a time, to give him another trial for eternal life."

And you add, with the greatest imaginable simplicity and truth, that "to establish this position it is necessary that we understand in what *this death* consisted."

This is admirable! But still you are right: for how can you

know that the threatened penalty was not inflicted till you know what that penalty was? Now to determine this point is in fact the great object, and ought to have been the only object, of your lectures. But it so happens with your logic that the *conclusion* which you were to arrive at only through the discussion of three distinct propositions, must, forsooth, be foisted in before you can establish even the first, and "is necessary" to make one of your *premises* ! I cannot sufficiently express my admiration of this proceeding.— Here we have a sermon of more than seventy pages to prove that the execution of the penalty of God's law will result in the endless punishment of the wicked ; and yet you cannot take a single step in your argument until you have assumed that this penalty is the very thing that so protracted a discussion was to prove !

But the method you adopt to understand in what the threatened penalty consisted, is also deserving of notice. You attempt to show that the Universalist views of it are incorrect, and then very good-naturedly take it for granted that your own are true. Perhaps had you been able to show that this penalty consisted in endless death, your auditors and readers could have inferred for themselves that the Universalist is in error. But there is some sleight of hand in this part of your labors which I shall find it necessary to examine, but must for the present confine myself to your general argument.

Your second proposition in this lecture, in which you labor to prove that "this inevitable penalty will be inflicted upon the finally impenitent in a future state of existence," is really a matter of curiosity. In the first place, it is necessarily implied in your first proposition. If you have proved that the penalty of God's law has not been, nor is fully executed in this life, it follows of course—at least according to the belief of Universalists, who never question the justice of God—that it will be inflicted in a future state of being. You might, therefore, had you reposed any confidence in your first proposition, have spared yourself all the quotations you have made from Merritt and Lee on the second. But if it were most unconditionally granted that there is a future punishment for the wicked, will you be good enough to inform me, what it has to do with endless misery, the doctrine which you wish to prove? It seems to me you might with safety have greatly economized your quotations, or wholly omitted them.

We now come to your third proposition, in which you are to show that the infliction of the penalty will result in the endless punishment of the wicked. This is the all important subject of your lectures, and after wasting more than one half of your volume in preliminaries which are altogether unnecessary, and so far as I can perceive, useless, I am glad to find you at last entering in earnest upon the labor before you. But here again I am doomed to disappointment. I had hoped to see an exposition of your text. I had anticipated some proof that the word death there used by inspiration means eternal, or as you say, endless death. Instead of this, however, we have Dr. Johnson and Webster's definitions of *eternal* and *everlasting*. We have Mr. Groves' definition of *aionios*, and Dr. Clarke's remarks upon the Hebrew *olam* and the Greek *aion*. Then comes the same author's declamation upon Matt. xxv. 46, all borrowed from Luther Lee, and this is followed by Rev. Mr. Merritt's admirable exposition of Jude 7, borrowed by Mr. Merritt from Rev. O. Scott. To all this you add nine distinct arguments, drawn chiefly from Mr. Merritt and Mr. Lee, to prove that the wicked will be punished endlessly, and these of course are fortified by the whole class of Scripture texts which the advocates of that doctrine have quoted time out of mind in favor of their darling hypothesis, and which Universalists have explained again and again without being heard or noticed by their adversaries. We are told that if the punishment of the wicked were not endless, they might still be the subjects of prayer. But their case is hopeless, "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." We are told that the Scriptures draw a contrast between the condition of the righteous and the wicked which extends to eternity. The righteous go away into life eternal and the wicked into torment eternal. But I have not time even to mention the various arguments upon which you rely for the support of your doctrine. Suffice it to say we have nothing original here, and I suspect nothing conclusive.

One thing is quite worthy of notice. Through the whole of your first and second lectures, occupying more than three fourths of your book, there is scarcely a mention of your text, and not the slightest legitimate attempt to furnish your readers with its interpretation! And this, too, in a formal reply to an exposition of this passage of scripture!

The object of your third and last lecture is to contrast the gift of God which is eternal life, with the wages of sin which is death, and you close your labors with a number of objections against Universalism. You tell us that in this lecture you shall confine yourself to the latter division of your text—"the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here you inquire :

- "1. What are we to understand by eternal life ?
2. By what proof we know that it is the gift of God.
3. We shall inquire to whom is it given."

This appears to me a strange way of proving that the wages of sin is endless death. But you are certainly at liberty to pursue your own course.

On page 115, my eyes are gladdened by the sight of these longed-for words, "We now come to consider our text, 'For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'" But, alas ! with your eye resting on a clear refutation of the oft-repeated but groundless assertion, that since death is here contrasted with *eternal life* it must therefore mean *eternal death*, you reiterate the absurdity and pass on. This consideration of your text, including two or three short quotations, is extended to a fraction over *twenty lines* !—and the conclusion is as clear as your assertion can make it, that as "eternal life is an eternal union with God in glory," "its opposite must be an eternal separation from God, which is endless death" !

But I am tired, and I doubt not my reader is also. Let any man who has the patience, read my sermon on the penalty of sin, and then carefully peruse your lectures in reply, and candidly answer his own heart whether he there finds either a refutation of my argument or an exposition of your text. I cannot avoid the conviction that whatever else you have done, you have not attempted to discuss the question properly in debate. In my next I shall return to the consideration of your first lecture.

I am, with due respect, yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER IV.

Dear Sir—According to an intimation in my last, I now proceed to offer some remarks on your first lecture. As you have wholly occupied yourself in this lecture, however, on an inquiry altogether aside from the proper subject of discussion, it is by no means necessary for me to follow you. But it is necessary to point out an egregious mistake into which you fall in the very outset, and on which the whole lecture is predicated.

The object of this lecture as stated at its head, is *to harmonize the existence of moral and natural evil with the administration of the moral government of God*. This design soon fades away, however, into an attempt to show the superiority of Wesleyanism over Universalism, in accounting for the existence of evil in the moral universe. There is something really amusing in the sober efforts we here see to convince Universalists that man is actually a moral and accountable being! At the same time it is humiliating to observe a professed teacher of the people standing forth and making such an exhibition of his most profound ignorance of the subject which he attempts to discuss!

But it may be interesting to see what conceptions you have of Universalism, or rather what kind of Universalism you propose to examine and refute. I shall therefore quote your account of them entire. You say—

“We may remark that there are two classes of Universalists. 1. *Restorationists*. These believe in the moral liberty of man, and in a future state of rewards and punishments; but deny that future punishment will be endless, and assert that it will bring about repentance and final holiness. 2. The other class of Universalists, which will form the subject of this discourse, are called *non-retributionists*. They deny a general judgment at the last day, and believe that all the dead will have a resurrection to eternal life and happiness. They also hold that God has made man what he is, by a train of events which have befallen him, and that the powers with which he is en-

endowed have been called into action by the force of circumstances, or by the influence of surrounding objects, which are designed irresistibly to control his impulses and to determine the moral quality of his actions. Of consequence, they deny the *free moral agency of man.*"

Were I persuaded that you had taken any suitable pains to inform yourself on the subject of Universalist opinions, I should feel indignant at such a gross misrepresentation of them. But of this fortunately you have afforded no evidence. Your lectures throughout display just such a knowledge of Universalism as a very hasty perusal of your three or four favorite authors might furnish to a mind which was too intent on victory to be very solicitous for the truth. But think not, sir, that I am disposed to exculpate you from all blame on the plea of ignorance. By no means. I would have you remember that he who utters an untruth, or bears false witness against his neighbor, from having employed no means to acquaint himself with the truth, although he may perhaps be destitute of malice, stands next in guilt to him who deliberately utters a known falsehood.

In the above definition of Universalism, it will be observed there is no mention of Christ or of the grace of God. Among the *Restorationists* "future punishment" seems to hold the place and perform the office of a Savior; for you tell us "they assert that it will bring about repentance and final holiness." And as to the other class of Universalists it would seem that they are not and never were in any need of a Redeemer. They are called, you say, *non-retributionists*. By whom? Do they take this name upon themselves, or is it generally given them by others? If I am not mistaken, this must constitute one feature of the "originality" displayed in your lectures, of which your friends speak in such high terms. But what are *non-retributionists*? If the word has any meaning, it must signify those who believe in no retribution, or punishment. And such seems to be the sense in which you employ it; for you proceed to say that "they hold that God has made man what he is by a train of events; that he is subjected to circumstances and the influence of surrounding objects, which are designed irresistibly to control his impulses and to determine the moral quality of his actions," and that "they deny the *free moral agency of*

man." Of course, man is not accountable, and consequently they are *non-retributionists*.

The origin of this idea may be found perhaps in one of the discourses of Dr. Fisk, which fortunately was within your reach, and of which you seem to have availed yourself. True, the Doctor does not call Universalists *non-retributionists*, but he asserts that most of them are fatalists, and all ought to be; and argues with all the clearness of the old schoolmen, that on their principles there should be no punishment at all. You have only perfected what was so well begun, and believing them all to be fatalists you call them *non-retributionists*. I am aware there is a trifling inconsistency running throughout your lectures; for while you call Universalists by this name, you constantly speak of their believing in sin and punishment, and even spurn their faith as "a Christless system," because they believe with Paul, that "he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." But in this instance, you have the example of your Coryphaeus, Dr. Fisk, before you. He tells us with rather more dignity than truth, that "the more general motto now [among Universalists] is, What ever *is*, is right. Every thing is according to the will of God." And yet under the influence of a most treacherous memory he makes this acknowledgement. "We have been told in this desk again and again that *all* men will suffer to the full extent of their crimes; and this sentiment is taught by most modern Universalist preachers, and by almost all their periodical publications." What short-sighted mortals Universalists must be, to contend that there is no sin,—whatever *is*, is right,—and yet affirm that *all* men will be punished to the full extent of their crimes! I do not wonder that Dr. Fisk's wrath is excited; I only wonder that he will waste the energies of his very acute mind in ferreting out and exposing such unspeakable folly.

But let me ask how much truth there is in this broad charge of fatalism, preferred against Universalists by Dr. Fisk, and repeated with additions by Mr. Remington. Is it true that all or most of the Universalists in this country are fatalists? The answer to this question must depend on the meaning of the word. If such men as Edwards and Toplady, and Crombie and Dewar, are fatalists, if the various Calvinistic churches throughout the world are fatalists,

then I suppose a portion of Universalists must be content to go under the same opprobrious title ; for a portion of them are originally from the Calvinistic ranks, and have brought along with them their peculiar opinions on this subject. But that all or most of them are so, is most pointedly denied. I believe that the larger part of our denomination adopts the doctrine of *liberty* in opposition to that of *necessity*. True, they do not hold man to be such a free agent as he is sometimes represented ; so free that even God himself can have no influence over him, but that which physical omnipotence confers ; so free indeed that the Almighty can do nothing with him but damn him for ever. In short, Universalists do not believe in a freedom which may bid defiance to the Creator, and thwart every plan of his government and every wish of his heart.

On this subject the Universalist denomination is in a condition similar to that of the Episcopal Church. The opinions of liberty and necessity are both tolerated, and with respect to freedom men are left free. It has been, and still is, felt that it is a question not easily solved. We know that mighty minds have been employed on both sides in its discussion. It is not yet settled, and there is no prospect that it will soon be. It is attended with dangers on both sides. Sometimes the doctrine of necessity has been urged so far as to reduce man to a mere machine, and annihilate moral character and accountability. Sometimes the doctrine of liberty or free will has been driven to such extremes as to question and even deny the foreknowledge of the Deity, and in effect to prove destructive of the divine government, if not fatal to the truth of the divine existence. On such a subject, moderation and candor are peculiarly needful. Perhaps under their influence both parties might be led to think more favorably of each other ; for it is not only possible, but I think quite probable, that both have embraced essential truth in part, and in part perhaps rejected it. The sovereignty of God, and the freedom of the human will may both be true, and in a manner which we are yet unable to comprehend, perfectly harmonious.

Had I time it would please me to inquire into the nature and extent of *man's free moral agency* as generally held and taught by the disciples of John Wesley. They boast much of this feature of their creed, and sometimes speak as if it relieved them from all embarrassment and helped them at once

“ To justify the ways of God to man.”

Such is the language of your first lecture. But, sir, will you have the goodness to inform me how long this free moral agency is to continue? Does it live separate beyond the grave, or is it like the Gorgon, called *Probation* by Dr. Pond, confined exclusively to this life? But if it acts only here, is man to be a *machine* in the world to come—a machine such as you ascribe to the fatalist in this present state? And is it so, then, that thus far in the history of the world this boasted freedom has proved to ninety-nine in every hundred but “a snare and a trap,” which has only secured their everlasting misery? In short, has it been but a stepping stone to a fatalism the darkest and most hopeless? Or if this moral freedom is to exist beyond the present life and forever, will you ask Dr. Fisk to inform the world what necessity there is for Universalism to be founded solely on predestination? May not men be saved without any violation of their freedom?

I have now spoken on the only point in your first lecture which seems to me to demand attention. With your argument for man's free moral agency against fatalism, I have nothing to do. I am not a fatalist: Universalists are not fatalists, nor non-retributionists, whatever yourself and Dr. Fisk may affirm to the contrary.

I am with all due respect, yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER V.

Dear sir—I admire the candor you exhibit in saying that you have stated the views of Universalists *as you understand them*, and in pleading that if you have misrepresented them it is not to be attributed to design, but “unavoidably results from the discordant opinions of Universalists themselves.” That is, Universalists, “as you understand them,” are all *fatalists*, and deny that man is the author of his own actions and character; but if this be not the fact, you wash your hands from all the guilt of misrepresentation; because, forsooth, there are discordant opinions among them! But

how happens it, sir, that while there are, as you say, "almost as many theories as there are societies or ministers among them," you should unhesitatingly accuse them all of downright fatalism, and argue against them solely on that ground? Did this "unavoidably result from the discordant opinions among Universalists themselves"? I cannot but think, that if such an endless diversity of sentiment exists among Universalists, it would have been fair at least to have mentioned the circumstance while giving an outline of their opinions.

But where did you learn that Universalism is so exceedingly multiform, while Universalists themselves are believers in the most rigid fatalism? Not from their own works, I suspect; for, as I have before intimated, these are obviously not very familiar to your mind. A single sermon is, I believe, the only Universalist production, which your lectures discover any trace of having been read by you! Fortunately, however, your excellent friend, Dr. Fisk, was at hand and furnished you with the very information you needed.—This distinguished author said about ten years since, that "like the Hydra of antiquity, this system has many heads, and when one is cut off there are others left, and when these are assailed, the former springs out anew." He lamented that "if one would attack it, he hardly knows what to attack; he finds it a very Proteus." While, as Dr. Fisk affirms, "Universalism is founded on predestination;" and while "it is a fact which, it is presumed, will not be denied, that most of the Universalists through our country are fatalists, and those who are not are evidently ignorant of their system"—it seems a little strange I confess that he could find nothing stable in it, and hardly knew what to attack. But it is still more strange that with his glaring inconsistencies before you, you should not only see them not, but actually copy them, and after having repeated and added to his misstatement relative to the fatalism of Universalists, you should go on to quote from his pages the following words: "Some expect to be saved through the infinite merits of Christ; and others because of the trifling demerit of sin. One expects irresistible grace here will draw him, another that irresistible justice hereafter will drive him, to holiness and heaven. This one talks of free agency, another of fatality," &c. It must be confessed, however, that you deserve great praise for the original and summary method

you have adopted. Notwithstanding all that Dr. Fisk and you yourself have said of the "confusion worse confounded" which exists among the opinions of Universalists, you reduce them all in a trice, as by some magic process, into graceless fatalism, and then with one throw of the sling of free agency, you annihilate the dark mass forever !

But let us turn our attention more particularly to your second lecture. There is one statement in the early part of this lecture, which deserves and merits attention, and which might have been appropriately introduced in my last letter. You speak of the important principle of the divine government "which recognizes man as a free moral agent;" and affirm that God "will never deprive him of this necessary constituent of his moral nature for the purpose of making him either holy and happy, or sinful and miserable." This, Mr. Remington, is a statement of some importance, and I therefore presume you did not make it hastily, though I am ready to acknowledge my conviction at the same time that you are but very imperfectly aware of the consequences to which it must legitimately lead you. You are a warm, and if the above statement was made understandingly, a consistent advocate of man's moral freedom. But did you ever dream, sir, that this doctrine is subversive of your whole theory of the penalty of sin, and of the administration of the divine government toward man as a sinner?

You say that man is recognized as a free moral agent; that this moral agency is a necessary constituent of his moral nature; and that God will never deprive him of it for the purpose of making him either holy and happy, or sinful and miserable. It follows of course that man cannot be holy or sinful during any portion of his existence, either in time or eternity, only in accordance with his own free moral agency. He forms his own moral character, and may change it at his pleasure. If this be true, the popular doctrine of "no change after death" is obviously groundless. For who can have the hardihood to say that man is a free moral agent forever, and yet contend that his character is unalterably fixed at the moment of his death? Another consequence of this your doctrine of free agency is, that the rewards and punishments of human actions are not endless. If the penalty of sin, for instance, is, as you contend, endless death or misery, how, I ask, after man has committed

one action meriting this punishment, can he be called free? Grant that he may do what he pleases, that he may love God and serve him; but can this avail him any thing; must he not suffer endless punishment? Glorious indeed must be the gift of this eternal free agency, and unspeakably grand must be its advantages, if the very first act we ever perform under its blessed auspices, seals irrevocably our endless damnation! Yet so it happens to our fallen and ruined nature.

Perhaps we may gain clearer views of this subject by enlarging the field of our observation. If God will never deprive man of his moral freedom for the purpose of making him either holy and happy, or sinful and miserable, it necessarily follows, as I have before remarked, that our holiness or sinfulness exists only in accordance with this freedom. We *will* to be holy or sinful. But it can hardly be said that we *will* to be happy or miserable. On this subject our freedom does not avail us. Do what we can, summon our moral agency as we may, it is after all utterly impossible to *will* to be miserable. Here we can have but one wish. As Dr. Young has well said,

"The love of pleasure is man's eldest born,
Born in his cradle, living to his tomb."

Yet happiness and misery are, by the appointment of God, either the concomitants or consequences of holiness and sin. They attend or follow virtuous and vicious actions respectively, with the same certainty as we observe in the case of a physical cause and its consequence. Happiness indeed appears to be the unvarying consequence of holiness, and misery, in the same manner, of sin. "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be WELL with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ILL with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Such is the uniform testimony of revelation.

But if misery invariably attends or follows sin as its consequence, why do men commit sin, especially as it is impossible for them to wish to be miserable? On the contrary, if happiness is always produced by holiness, and if all men love and seek for happiness and this alone, why do they not constantly endeavor to be holy? I answer: the world is not yet convinced that "the way of the transgressor is hard," or that there is any certain connexion between sin

and misery. They heed not the voice of experience : they despise the word of God, or even if they profess to honor its authority, they will not listen to its solemn truths which clash with their prejudices and passions. And I regret to add, that even Christianity is so perverted or misunderstood as to lend its countenance to this unhappy delusion ! It is thought to teach that there is no connexion between sin and misery, or at least, that it may be dissolved at the sinner's pleasure. Indeed it is supposed to be the chief glory of the Christian religion, the feature most calculated to excite our gratitude and love, that it reveals the grand panacea by which the sinner can easily escape the punishment of his sin.

Notwithstanding the popular nature of this doctrine, and its peculiar adaptation to the wishes of a corrupt and sinful world, I cannot shake off the conviction which the united testimony of experience and revelation have impressed upon my mind, that a just God will reward every man according to his works, and that he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done without respect of persons.

But the world is not only unconvinced that sin is always attended or followed by misery ; it has receded still farther from the truth, and actually come to think, in many instances, that the way of the transgressor is easy, a kind of "royal road" to happiness, a species of shunpike, which, without the trouble of toll-gates and bridges, leads more directly and readily to the great object of human wishes. As if to give this pleasing idea the greater currency and success, the professed ministers of the gospel have sometimes represented the way of sin as very desirable. It is a broad and beautiful way, into which we enter through a wide and attractive gate. It is shaded with trees, and the road-side is adorned with the loveliest flowers. Gentle breezes loaded with their perfume, are playing along the way ; in short, every thing is there, necessary to gratify and delight the senses of the traveller. There too, it is said, is the best company this world affords, and all that wealth and fashion can do to make the way-faring man comfortable and happy. To this charming description, so calculated to interest and attract the multitude, there is only one drawback, and this, but for a most ingenious device, might perhaps nullify the whole. This road leads to hell ! The device of which I speak is the pretended discovery

that one may pursue this road to the very brink of perdition, and yet, if he pleases, turn suddenly aside to heaven; thus enjoying all the pleasures of this world, and securing all the glories and felicity of the next.

How powerful these views are to sustain the cause of true virtue and godliness, I leave others to decide; but it seems to me that if a wicked world could have had the privilege of giving character to the divine government, it would have hardly pleased itself better than, according to this representation, is already done. Man can now sin to his heart's content, as is generally believed, without incurring more than a very distant danger; and it is only by accident or his own extreme carelessness, that he need be subjected to the penalty of the divine law. Grateful, indeed, must such a doctrine be to the heart of the sinner; for it is of little consequence that the penalty of the law is "endless death," since it can be so easily avoided!

It is strange, but so it happens, that the only christians in the country, who believe that "justice and judgment are the habitation" of God's throne, and that he "rewards every man according to his works," are at the same time called *non-retributionists*!

But man is a free moral agent, and of this necessary constituent of his moral nature God will never deprive him for the purpose of making him either holy and happy, or sinful and miserable. But why do you unite these respective terms? Has the thought taken possession of your mind that there is in fact any necessary connexion between holiness and happiness, and sin and misery? If so, beware—your whole system is in danger. In that case a man's well or ill-being depends upon his character. Without holiness he cannot see the Lord; with it, he cannot avoid seeing Him. In that case too, there is really no mystery in God's being just and yet good, in punishing and yet loving the sinner. There is no want of harmony between the proper administration of his moral government, and the introduction of his plan of salvation by grace. Christ did not come to save man from the punishment of his sin, the penalty of the broken law, but he came to save man from his sins, from sinning, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

But man is a free moral agent. Grant it. God will never do

prive him of this agency. Grant it. Then it will exist as certainly and fully in the future world as here, as certainly, as fully in hell as on earth or in heaven. And if this be so, will you still assert that man's state is irrevocably fixed, that there is no change after death? Will you contend that with the ability to repent and obey God, he will continue for ever a slave to passion and sin; and especially so when every day's experience is teaching him that "the way of the transgressor is hard"? This, it appears to me, would be assuming a point of sufficient importance to demand some proof. I grant you that man is a free agent and that God will never destroy this freedom. On this truth I take my stand, and I challenge you to prove that any free agent, possessing an innate and unconquerable love of happiness, as all men do, will be endlessly miserable. Nay, I will not ask for proof, I will demand only a probability. Show me reasons which can render it probable that, endowed with an indestructible moral freedom, man will eternally sin and eternally suffer; that with all the powers which God has given him, he will never learn that sin is "an evil and a bitter thing," and that to consult his own interest he must obey the commandments of God, in the keeping of which there is great reward—and I will endeavor to be satisfied.

The Calvinist may well believe in endless misery. The proper Arminian may also with some degree of consistency cling to this darling tenet. But for a disciple of John Wesley to contend for that doctrine is for a man to close his eyes to the sun and draw his bow in the dark. How does he know that Christ died in vain; and that man was made a free agent that God without dishonor might damn him? If man is free only during this life, let that truth be preached, and let it be understood that we are all very soon to take our places among the "machines" of which we have heard so much, to praise or curse the Almighty as may best suit him who made, supports and governs us. But talk no more of God's never depriving man of this necessary constituent of his moral nature for the purpose of making him either holy and happy, or sinful and miserable.

I have protracted this letter perhaps beyond what was necessary; and even now it is not what I could wish. The remark which has induced me to say so much, was I presume dropped inadvertently,

and without the suspicion that it was inconsistent with your general theory. You did not mean, it is possible, all that you said. You cannot in reality contend that man is to be eternally a free moral agent, and yet that he is threatened for every sinful act with endless death. The absurdity, it seems to me, is too glaring to escape the observation of any mind.

I am yours, &c.

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER VI.

Dear Sir—In the beginning of your second lecture you are pleased to say, "There is one very important item in the divine administration, upon which, as far as the abstract truth is concerned, our opponents [Universalists] will most cordially agree with us. It is this;—that the moral government of God must have for its object the production of the greatest possible amount of holiness and happiness in the human family, both in this world and in the world to come."—You then add with an air of triumph, "I will now ask the believer in non-retribution, Has the government of God accomplished its object in the world? Has it effected the greatest possible sum of holiness and happiness among mankind? According to their plan it certainly has not; for, upon their views of man's agency, God could have consistently prevented all the moral and physical evil that ever has existed or ever will exist. But he has not done it; and that too from his own choice, and not from any prevailing necessity in the case."

Whatever force this reasoning may have against the opinions of "the fatalist," it seems to me that it is irrelevant to the controversy between the Methodist and the Universalist. Were I fatalist, however, I would endeavor to show you, that in attempting to avoid Scylla you have precipitated yourself into Charybdis. To save man from the controlling influence of necessity, you subject the Deity himself to its rigors. You speak as if he was under a "prevailing necessity" to permit the existence of moral evil, and that with all his benevolent wishes and all his love of holiness, there is a "necessity" that he should be disappointed forever. He

wills to have all men saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, but alas, this consummation shall never be attained! That I do not misrepresent your views on this subject, may appear from the following language:

“We say that the great object which the government of God aims to accomplish, is the greatest possible sum of moral holiness and happiness among mankind. And we say, moreover, that it does accomplish this object—that God makes man here, and will hereafter make him just as holy and happy as he can. Nevertheless, we see that men are unholy and unhappy here, and we have reason to believe that many will be the same hereafter.”

It might be well perhaps to carry out this kind of reasoning to its legitimate extent. If you are justified in concluding, that because we see unholiness and unhappiness under the divine government in this world, we may or must see the same in the world to come and forever, you would also be justified in concluding on the same grounds that all men must continue unholy and unhappy throughout eternity! For we see them so here; and according to this argument, if God cannot make men to-day, or in this world, what he wishes and designs them to be, he can never attain in them the actual object of their creation. God has done the best he could for them here, but still they are sinful and miserable creatures, and although he will always continue to make them as holy and happy as he can, yet the prospect of sinless purity and unalloyed bliss for any human being is dark indeed, and for the world, the faintest hope is utterly precluded. If this kind of argument possesses any force whatever, it applies to all men as well as to a single individual—to Peter, and John and Paul as well as to Judas Iscariot.

But does the fact that we see men unholy and unhappy here, furnish conclusive or even probable grounds for the belief that they will be so forever? What the Divine government does not accomplish in the present moment, must not therefore be regarded as unattainable; for that government, as all history shows, is progressive. It is over free moral natures that God asserts his authority, and it is such natures that must be brought in willing subjection to his mild and beneficent sway. It is not an exhibition of physical power that can melt and subdue the soul. Terror appeals in vain

to the free will. Were it otherwise, the world might be converted and saved in a moment. But God has been pleased to make man a moral being, and the subject of a moral government; and now he deals with him as such. But in making man free, he did not reduce himself to slavery, nor put it in the creature's power to disappoint the Creator and thwart forever his holiest purposes. In a moral system such as infinite wisdom has established, temporary moral evil was to have been expected, and was expected, and the remedy provided in "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."—When therefore sin entered into the moral world and commenced its career, and the struggle between the powers of sin and of holiness began in the domain of man's free nature, the Deity was neither astonished nor disappointed, nor did it dim the glory of one of the divine attributes, since he foresaw how the strife would end, and knew that where, and however, sin abounds, grace should much more abound. He knew that without any violation of man's free will, the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and at last proclaim a victory complete and eternal over sin. Jesus Christ is set forth as the restorer, nay more than the restorer, of our race. He is the Lord of life and glory, and is constituted of God the head of all. He must reign till, "all things shall be subdued unto him." "But now," perhaps you are ready to say, "we see not yet all things put under him." True; but we have the pledge of the fulfilment of this prophecy. We do not yet see the work accomplished, "but," as St. Paul reasons, "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor; that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man," or as Dr. Bloomfield has well said, "that by the goodness and mercy of God, this his suffering of death might be efficacious for the salvation of all men." To the believing heart, this exhibition of Jesus upon the cross of Calvary, furnishes the most satisfactory evidence of his final victory and triumph; and of the consequent gathering together of all men in himself. During his ministry he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." True, we do not yet see all men drawn unto the Captain of our salvation, but we have seen him lifted up from the earth, and shall we doubt the veracity of the Son of God?

But I cannot yet leave this subject. I have one question to ask you, and your Methodist brethren, in whose name you speak. Do you really believe that the moral government of God, has for its object the production of the greatest possible amount of holiness and happiness in the human family, both in this world and in the world to come? If you thus believe, it would be gratifying to me to know what means you imagine the Deity will employ in the world to come, for the benefit of those who die unbelieving and impenitent. According to the important principle which you have laid down and repeated, he must seek and strive to attain their greatest holiness and happiness! We have often heard of a large part of the human family sinning away their day of grace, and at last being plunged into a burning hell, where a single ray of hope or of mercy never shines, but where full vials of infinite wrath shall be poured out upon the naked soul forever! But a better day seems to be dawning upon the church and the world. I am rejoiced to see such unequivocal tokens of improvement in this horrible dogma, as so staunch an advocate as you yourself are pleased to offer me. I am glad that you and your brethren are disposed to allow "the God of all grace" who is so kind to poor sinners here, to do what he can for bettering their character and condition hereafter. I cordially thank you, therefore, for the grateful and cheering truth which you have so clearly and forcibly expressed, that "*God makes man here, and will hereafter make him just as holy and happy as he can.*" And most devoutly do I thank my God, that his word sustains me in entertaining such views of his character, and of the constraining power of Christ's love, that I am willing, nay more, that I even rejoice to leave the result in his hands. Let me be assured that God will forever make his intelligent creatures just as holy and happy as he can, and I am satisfied. If under these circumstances, the Almighty eternally fails to subdue his rebellious subjects, or any part of them, to his peaceful reign, I shall seek to be becomingly resigned to an evil which neither the Messiah nor God himself can avoid. But before you ask me to indulge fears of so deplorable a result, you must convince me that man is so free that even his Maker cannot govern him, and that he may bid a proud and successful defiance to the Most High. Nay, you must convince me farther, that man not only can, but with a moral free-

dom which no lapse of time can impair, with an indestructible love of happiness and dread of misery, and with a conviction which every day's experience only deepens and confirms, that 'there is no peace to the wicked'; with all the tokens of God's goodness scattered around him, and the moving tones of the parental voice ever sounding in his ears, saying, My child, return; I will that thou shouldst be saved and be happy; with the scenes of the cross ever before his eyes, and the memory of the touching, heart-melting love of the Savior of sinners, sinking, day by day, deeper and deeper into his inmost soul;—nay, you must convince me that man not only can, but, with all these dissuasives from rebellion on the one hand, and these and ten thousand like appeals for holiness and God on the other, *actually will* eternally continue to sin, and rush on in mad and senseless opposition to his heavenly Father, without an object, without hope, and without end!

If the principles which you have laid down in this part of your work are true; if God will never deprive man of his moral freedom, and if He makes him here, and will make him hereafter just as holy and happy as he can, I must candidly confess that of all improbabilities, I regard that of endless misery the most desperate. If these are acknowledged facts in God's government, I can scarcely think the doctrine before us worthy of even a patient hearing. It is the last hypothesis that human ingenuity can produce, to claim a candid man's attention. And I cannot avoid the expression of my astonishment that with such concessions from your own lips before you, a volume should still be written to prove, what to say the least, neither man nor angel, nor God himself can know to be true, and what bears every mark of improbability, not to say falsehood, about it—that a large portion of free moral agents whom God will here and hereafter make as holy and happy as he can, will be needlessly, hopelessly, endlessly, and unspeakably wretched.

I am, with due respect, yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER VII.

Dear Sir—I shall now proceed to the consideration of the argument in your second lecture. We agree that “death” is the penalty of the divine law, as expressed in the original prohibition, Gen. ii. 17, and recognized by the apostle Paul, Rom. vi. 23. We differ in our views of the meaning of this word, and consequently of the nature and extent of the divine punishment. In my sermon entitled “The Penalty of Sin,” which was the occasion of your lectures, and the doctrines of which you attempt to refute, I showed, as I think, conclusively, that endless misery makes no part of the death threatened to Adam, and of course no part of the penalty of the divine law. Or rather, I showed all that the nature of a negative proposition of the kind admits, viz. that *there is no proof that endless misery constitutes the penalty, or any part of the penalty of God’s law.*

The task which you assumed was a very plain one, and in case it could be performed at all, must be susceptible of easy accomplishment. For I would impress upon your mind the obvious fact, that if God has in his word threatened man with endless misery, that threatening can be found, and one would naturally think, found in the most explicit and unequivocal terms. It would be thought very strange if no individual in the whole legal profession of New York, could find the penalty of death in our book of statutes; and especially so, if notwithstanding, the majority of them should contend it was there. Would not every one say, If it is there you can undoubtedly find it; and if you can find it, you can show it, and prove it against all contradiction; for it is absolutely incredible that any legislature should attach the penalty of death to a law and yet express that penalty in such dark or ambiguous terms that it could be made out only on merely probable evidence! But the case under consideration is still more striking, as it is infinitely more important. Here the penalty, if you are correct, is not the suffering of a few moments, nor the extinction of life; on the contrary, it is inconceivable torment, inflicted under circumstances

the most horrible, and to be continued through all the ages of eternity! Now what kind of proof have we not a right, nay, are we not bound by our rational nature, as we love ourselves, and as we would honor God, to demand in such a case? Dr. Clarke has well said, that "in the things which concern our eternal salvation, we need the *most pointed and express evidence*, on which to establish the faith of our souls." And if there be one doctrine in the universe that more than any other imperiously demands such evidence, it is the doctrine which you have volunteered to defend. Such a doctrine, it seems to me, is not to be made out by doubtful construction; it is not to be established by inferences; it is not to be proved by merely presumptive, or even the highest probable evidence. If it cannot be supported by "the most pointed and express evidence," it not only may be, but should be, regarded by every reasonable man as absolutely false.

Now the question is, Does the word "death," by which the penalty of the divine law is expressed, furnish this kind of evidence? The very fact that in every age sober and benevolent minds have found it so extremely difficult to prove this doctrine to their own satisfaction—the very fact that in these latter days volume after volume is written with so much labor and care and laid before the public for the avowed purpose of establishing it—the very fact that neither you, nor any other man living, dares risk the truth of this doctrine on a plain and direct scripture argument, but always think your cause the safer, the more it is involved—furnishes in itself the strongest proof that need be asked of its utter falsehood. If God had ever revealed such a doctrine, it could be easily, directly, and positively proved; and hence the total absence of such proof is convincing evidence that the doctrine is untrue.

But what is your argument? You say, and thus far we are agreed, that *death* is the penalty of the law. To prove that death embraces endless misery, you first attempt to show, "That this penalty of the law of God, which is the proper punishment of sin, has not been, nor is it fully executed in this life upon the transgressor." In the second place, you labor to show "That this inevitable penalty will be executed upon the finally impenitent in a future state of existence." And lastly, "That its execution will result in their endless misery."

Now these first two propositions are necessary or they are not. If they are necessary, then the third proposition, involving the only subject of dispute, depends upon them, and could not be proved without them. If they are not necessary, then they are merely smoke and dust to blind our eyes, without enlightening our understandings on the question in debate. That this is in fact the case, will appear from two considerations. The first is, that these propositions may be acknowledged true, without involving directly or indirectly, in any degree whatever, the truth of the third. I might concede, what thousands of Universalists have not only ever conceded, but contended for, that the penalty of the law is not in all cases fully inflicted in this life, and that it will be in the life to come; and yet it would avail you nothing towards proving endless misery. Future limited punishment and endless misery, are not more unlike in their duration, than they are in their very nature.—The former may belong to a good government; the latter can exist only under a malignant and cruel one. The former may be inflicted by a wise and gracious God; the latter only by an almighty devil. They are as unlike as the parental chastisement of a child and the tortures of the Inquisition! The Inquisition? The Inquisition, Mr. Remington, with all its diabolical apparatus, and fiend-like machinery, with its revealed and unrevealed tortures, with its power which was omnipotent against the single arm of the sufferer, with its resolution which nothing could shake, and its cruelty with which there were no minglings of compassion, and which fed on the sighs and writhings and screams of its victim—the Inquisition with all these horrors, was but a very, very feeble copy of hell. It was the electrical spark derived from the pitiful machine of the philosopher in comparison with the resistless thunderbolt of heaven. It was a moment of time in comparison with eternity. Man attempted for once to imitate his God, and although I would not deny the resemblance, still it was only finite, struggling to act out infinite malignity. The Inquisition; dear sir, was one of the legitimate fruits of that horrible dogma which you are unfortunate enough to advocate.

Another reason why your first and second propositions are not necessary to the third is, that you yourself make them dependent upon that as well as that upon them. To prove that the penalty of

the divine law was not inflicted fully in this life, and that it will be in the next, you inform us, "it is necessary that we understand in what *this death* consisted," i. e. you must first assume that it embraced endless misery before you can prove that it is not fully inflicted in this life; and on the other hand, you must prove that it was not inflicted in this life before you can establish the point that it is endless! This argument moves in a circle. The premise is necessary to the conclusion, while, behold, the conclusion is itself one of the data of the premise! I pity even a brute when I witness his labors in a tread-mill. That everlasting step, step, step, without advancing an inch, soon makes me nervous. But of all tread-mills the logical is the most horrible. True, it admits of one alleviation in common with others; the poor sufferer upon the wheel is generally blindfolded.

But if you can show what this threatened death is, i. e. if you can show that it is endless misery, I think you will scarcely find a man hardy enough to dispute the point with you that it is not fully inflicted in this life, and that it will be in the next. It will be conceded without debate, that endless punishment is not to be suffered in this world. Viewed in this light, your first and second propositions are perfectly nugatory. They are like a sober argument to prove that three-score and ten years, or the ordinary period of human life is not—eternity! I do not mean to insinuate that you were really ignorant of what you were about, or that you were impolitic in the course you were pleased to adopt. On the contrary, I presume you were quite conscious both of your strength and your weakness. If a man cannot shake Atlas, he may nevertheless demolish a mole-hill; if he cannot produce an earth-quake, he can at least raise a dust and smoke; if he cannot prove the dogma of endless misery he can talk flippantly, and perhaps to almost as good effect, about something else. Still I may say that the first eight and forty pages of your second lecture have no bearing on the doctrine in question, any farther than they are calculated to excite or foster the prejudice, that if men are not punished adequately in this world they must be punished endlessly in the world to come. Nevertheless, I must be permitted to follow you even here.

The first proposition which you attempt to prove is that "the penalty of the law of God has not been, nor is it, fully executed in

this life on the transgressor," or in other words, that the threatening of God to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," "was not executed upon man to the uttermost in the day on which he sinned, but was suspended for a time to give him another trial for eternal life." Your first labor is to clear your way by showing that the Universalist's opinions, or rather my opinions of the divine penalty are unsound. In this part of your lectures there is a piece of literary fraud that I shall take the liberty of pointing out. In the first place, you represent the Universalist as saying that the death threatened by God, "consisted in, 1. Spiritual death; and, 2. The death of the body, or a liability to mortality. The dogma of eternal death is not embraced in the penalty." This is presented as a quotation, and was obviously intended to be understood as from my sermon, for you immediately ask, "And how does he know that? He replies, 'It was to be inflicted on the very day of transgression,' &c." Here is a quotation truly made from my sermon and with several others acknowledged on the next page. There is no reader in the world who would not suppose that the first quotation was from the same source as the rest. Yet you knew that I had said nothing like it. It was undoubtedly made by yourself for the occasion, and apparently put in my lips. This is one instance. The next page of your lectures furnishes another, and if possible a still more glaring instance of dishonesty. I will present it at length, marking by italics such parts of the paragraph as deserve particular attention. You profess to quote the following passage from my sermon.

"The day was not past and they heard the voice of their Governor and Judge. Though naked and burning with shame, and trembling with fear, they must come forth and hear their doom. What was it? Let us answer in the words of inspiration, Gen. iii. 16, 17, 18, *which embraces the sufferings of the woman; the labor and sorrow of the man; the comparative sterility of the earth; and the mortality of both man and woman!* Temporal death, or man's mortality, was embraced in 'THEIR DOOM' or the sentence of the law, as well as spiritual death." You then add—"These are the views of the author above quoted, and doubtless of his brethren in general."

The reader may see how much of candor and fairness you exhibited by comparing so much of the preceding quotation as is italicised with the original which follows :

“Let us answer in the words of inspiration : ‘Unto the woman he said I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception ; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children ; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it ; cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field ; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken ; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.’ ”

There is a slight difference observable here, much the same I think as there is between our two religious systems. It consists in this. I employed the simple words of the Bible, and found them to my purpose ; you discarded them and substituted your own.— You fancied that you could make me, and even the Holy Ghost, speak more in accordance with your wishes and theory. But what motive could the reverend Mr. Remington have in playing such a prank as this ? I answer, it was very necessary for your argument that I should say that temporal or natural death constituted a part of the penalty. And although I had uttered nothing of the kind, still it was made to find a very prominent place not only in my own creed, but also in that of my “brethren generally.” One quotation was manufactured for the purpose, another was altered, and a third, which you found in the midst of a long quotation from Prof. Stuart—a quotation introduced on another point, and of course not necessarily approved in every sentiment it contained, was very generously ascribed to me. Thus was the fact established that I believed temporal death to be a part of the penalty !

But why all this anxiety to make me believe and say this ? The answer will be found in the fact that in my sermon I had insisted on the express and positive words of the original threatening. Man was to “surely die,” and die “in the day” he ate of the forbidden

fruit. I contended of course that eternal death or endless misery was not embraced in the threatening, because man did not die any such death on the day he sinned, and to doubt that the threatening was literally fulfilled was to doubt the divine veracity and take sides with the serpent. You would not attempt the refutation of this reasoning only on the condition that I would acknowledge temporal death was a part of the penalty. When you had helped me therefore to say that precisely as you wished, and my "brethren generally" to believe it, you had your mine prepared, and proceeded to blow up Universalism by springing it in the following manner. You say—

"I will now ask the Universalists if this threatening was executed to the uttermost, even as they understand it, upon the very day on which man sinned? That he then died a spiritual death we all admit; but did he also die a temporal death on that day? which must have been embraced in the penalty, or it could not have been any part of 'their doom.' No, he did not; for he lived until 'he was nine hundred and thirty years old.' There is therefore no certainty that eternal death was not included in the threatening, because it was not executed upon the very day of man's transgression, any more than there is a certainty that the death of the body was not included in the penalty, because man did not die a temporal death on the very day of his transgression."

Thus was your great object finally accomplished. And so felicitous did the thought appear that you pursued it through two or three pages, turning it in every paragraph with great success against me and my cause.

But after all, Mr. Remington, it was a dear-bought victory. You seemed to be unconscious of the fact, that if I had said all that you represented me as saying, your efforts could do no more than convict me of inconsistency. And for me to err or to be inconsistent is one thing, and for you to prove that God ever threatened man with endless misery is another, and a very different thing.—You apparently fell into the mistake of thinking them the same. Your victory, therefore, is of quite doubtful utility. And besides, it cost you some time and labor: it cost you no inconsiderable sacri-

fice of candor and justice; and above all, it showed that however holy and purifying may be the influence of the doctrine of endless misery, which, for the benefit of the moral world and for the salvation of souls, you were laboring to establish, it has not yet wrought such a desirable change in you as to keep back "the old man" from uttering untruths!

That I had expressed no sentiment like that which you ascribe to me is obvious from the simple fact that my sermon furnished you with nothing to your purpose. Never would you have adopted such a mode of making evidence had I prepared it ready to your hand. And that my "brethren generally" do not adopt such an opinion, your friend Mr. Lee would have informed you had you read him with due care. He says, *Universalism Examined*, p. 13, "It is probably generally known that modern Universalists deny that the death of the body is an effect of sin, and maintain that Adam was created mortal and that he and all our race would have died, if sin had never entered the world."

With due respect, I am yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER VIII.

Dear Sir—I must stop a moment at this stage of our examination, for the purpose of contrasting the spirit of your first proposition with the word of God, as recorded Gen. ii. 17. God said to Adam, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The serpent took it upon himself to contradict God and affirmed that man should not surely die! Which think you a professed minister of the Gospel ought to believe, God or the serpent? Whatever salvo you may find for your opinions, one thing is certain, you acknowledge, that for once at least, he who is "a liar and the father of it," spoke *the simple truth*, and spoke it too in direct contradiction of the word of God, length and breadth! I presume you did not mean to doubt the veracity of Jehovah, or to compliment the serpent by ascribing to him a quality which he never enjoyed the repu-

tation of possessing ; but it so happens that I altogether misunderstand you, or your language clearly implies both.

Whatever doubt there may be relative to the *death* with which man was threatened, I cannot think there is any with respect to the *time* when it was to be inflicted. You do not pretend to call in question what appears on the very face of the text, that God threatened to execute the penalty of his law on the day of transgression. Allow that it was not so inflicted, and that on millions and millions, as you suppose, it will never be inflicted at all, and it must be confessed that the serpent had uncommon candor at the moment, or a marvellous foresight, to enable him to make such a close approximation to the pure orthodoxy of the nineteenth century. But while you do the serpent such vast honor, I cannot but inquire for the veracity of God : and must lament that in this first instance of the violation of his law, his own word should have been kept as little by himself as his law was by his creature ; and that it was the well grounded anticipation of this failure to perform what he had most solemnly threatened, that constituted one of the chief causes of man's transgression. The serpent, honest and disinterested soul, began by kindly telling the woman that this menace of death was but a bugbear, a fiction. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden ?" The woman, in the simplicity of her heart, repeated the divine law with its penalty. And the serpent replied, "Ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened ; and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil." The woman, it seems, believed this insidious and damning falsehood, and rejecting the counsels of God, took satan for her guide, and with the delusive hope of becoming like an angel, hastened on to death. She "turned her back on the sun, and dwelt in the dark and the shadow." "Ye shall not surely die," said the serpent, and *they did not die*, says the Rev. Mr. Remington ! A strange coincidence indeed, when we consider the great diversity of the age, character and profession of the two individuals !

But perhaps you will attempt to lessen the severity of these remarks, by saying that you did not represent man as altogether escaping the threatened punishment even on the day of transgression. All that you said or attempted to prove, was that the penalty was not

fully executed on that day. I am certainly willing to allow you every indulgence, and to give due weight to every circumstance of palliation. Let us then ascertain how much you are disposed to qualify the assertion of the serpent. On page 45 you say, "We will now inquire how far was the penalty of the divine law executed upon man on the day of his transgression? We answer, In the inevitable consequences which followed. These are stated in Gen. iii. 7—13, and may be summed up in, 1. A knowledge of evil. 2. A loss of innocence. 3. A sense of guilt, shame, condemnation, and fear. 4. The just frowns of his Maker—this is spiritual death with some of its attendant evils. Thus far the penalty was executed, and no farther." Here then you inform us definitely how much of punishment man suffered on the day he sinned; and in a note to this statement you tell us also what part of the threatened penalty was suspended.—You say, "It is true that man was *exposed* both to temporal and spiritual [*eternal* you undoubtedly mean] death, but neither the one nor the other was executed upon him on that day."

The subject is now clear. The penalty consisted in death, which embraced death spiritual, death temporal and death eternal. Of these the first alone was inflicted as it was threatened. Though it might seem that even this was mitigated in some degree; for you say that spiritual death was inflicted, "with *some* of its attendant evils." But how great a portion of the attendant evils of spiritual death were then laid upon man you do not inform us. It is obvious, however, that even this part of the penalty was not fully inflicted. And even what was inflicted, was inflicted because it was *inevitable* and of course could not be "suspended"—and therefore man was thus far beyond the reach of pardon. But will you, dear sir, have the goodness to inform me why "spiritual death" was any more an "inevitable consequence" of transgression than "temporal," or "eternal death"? They were all threatened, if threatened at all, in the same word, and were included in the same penalty.

Again: since God, according to your theory, suspended by far the greater part of the penalty, it is presumable at least, that he would have suspended the whole had not a fraction of it been an "inevitable consequence" of sin; and then the prophecy of the serpent would have had a literal fulfillment! As it was, however, it came so little short of simple truth, that it must be an uncharitable spirit

that will complain. No one ought to censure the serpent, when on any subject whatever, he utters *twice* as much truth as God himself! And a more careful examination will show that the part of the penalty actually inflicted bears no assignable proportion to that which was suspended. It was an *infinitesimal* that may with safety be thrown out of the calculation. For how great-eoever the punishment of "spiritual death with some of its attendant evils" may be, it is obviously nothing in comparison with "eternal death," or endless misery. There was little necessity therefore for the extreme caution with which you stated your first proposition; and no exceptions would have been tenable, if instead of saying that the penalty of the divine law "was not *fully* executed," "was not executed to the *uttermost*" on the day of transgression, you had boldly said with the Rev. Josiah Hopkins,* that it was not inflicted at all.

The attempt you make to relieve yourself and your creed from the unpleasant predicament in which you stand, is rather ingenious than successful. We have seen how extremely anxious you were to involve me in a difficulty similar to your own, by representing me as holding that temporal death made a part of the divine penalty. This, however, was a mere *ruse de guerre*, which you never expec-

* This gentleman, who is a very respectable Presbyterian divine, and is located I believe at Auburn, N. Y. wrote a work entitled 'The Christian's Instructor,' which was severely handled in an examination entitled, 'The Instructor Instructed;' by a Methodist clergyman whose name I have now forgotten, in Vermont, where Mr. Hopkins then resided. It is the opinion of Mr. Hopkins that neither spiritual nor temporal death made any part of the divine penalty; and that eternal death was its sum total. Mr. Hopkins however, as well as yourself and thousands besides, was troubled how to carry out the hypothesis without transforming the first and most notorious liar in the universe into a true prophet, and that too in direct opposition to the express word of God himself!! But our author met the difficulty like a man, and cut the knot which he was unable to untie. He asks the question, 'If eternal death be the penalty of the law, was not the declaration of the serpent true, "Thou shalt not surely die"? and how was the contrary declaration of the Almighty fulfilled?' *Answer.* Adam did not die an eternal death, nor did he enter upon such a state, it is true; but no thanks to him or the serpent either, because it was justly deserved, and because it was suspended, not as an act of *justice* but of *infinite grace*." That must be a lame theology indeed, which finds no opportunity for 'infinite grace' only as a substitute of infinite justice and truth; and that must be a questionable doctrine, which can be sustained only upon the sacrifice of God's word, and the verification of *satán's* falsehood.

ted to succeed beyond the circle of your own friends in the faith.— For it matters not in this case what I believe or disbelieve. The question is, Did God threaten man with eternal death on the day he should transgress? You contend that he did. Once more: Did he inflict it as he had most solemnly threatened? You say he did not. Where then I ask is the divine veracity? It avails you nothing to throw out the suspicion that I “leave Christ and his atonement out of the question.” It avails you nothing to say that “upon the very day in which man sinned God graciously interposed a Saviour,” and therefore he “could be just in suspending the execution of the penalty of his law.” If God did not execute the penalty of his law as he threatened, if there was a suspension here and man was put upon another trial for eternal life, it would be gratifying to know what authority you have for asserting, as you do in your second proposition, that “this inevitable penalty (?) will be executed upon the finally impenitent in a future state of existence.” If he suspended it once, notwithstanding his own most solemn threatening, and as if on purpose to verify the prophecy of the serpent, there is at least good ground to think that he will suspend it again and forever, notwithstanding the declaration of Mr. Remington! As the good Bishop Jeremy Taylor said, “God knows best how intolerably accursed a thing it is to perish in the eternal flames of hell, and therefore he is not easy to inflict it.”

Before leaving this part of the subject I must offer a few additional remarks. One of your most specious and weighty objections to my views of the divine penalty and its execution, is founded on the assumption that if man suffered what God had threatened, then he had no part in a Saviour, and “has a right, (these are your own words,) to demand an admittance into heaven as his just due, and owes no gratitude to the Saviour of sinners for the privilege:”—yea, “he is in heaven without the mediation and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.” If a wise man will talk folly, let him talk, but certainly we have some reason to ask that he should be consistent in it. Let us see then how you sustain yourself. The penalty you say consisted in three parts, temporal, spiritual and eternal death. Of these, one was inflicted on the day of transgression, because it was an inevitable consequence. This was death spiritual. Temporal death was suspended for a time, but we all know that this is

also inevitable at last, for dust we are and unto the dust must we return. So far as death temporal and spiritual are concerned, then, the Saviour avails us nothing according to your own theory. Thus far, then, we have no part in the Saviour; and so far has Adam and all his posterity "a right to demand an admittance into heaven as their just due, and owe no gratitude to the Saviour of sinners for the privilege." Perhaps if you would read the Bible with more care, you would learn that Christ came to save his people from their *sins* and not from the *punishment* of their sins; that he came to save men from *deserving* punishment rather than from punishment *deserved*. And if you would learn to think with more sobriety perhaps you might perceive, that a man's having suffered the just punishment of his crimes, gives him no very high claim to heaven. I doubt whether you would think your child had "a right to demand as its just due" the highest boon in your power to confer, merely on the ground that it had suffered the full punishment which you could in justice inflict. Nor would you ever imagine that a man who had fully and faithfully served the period of his sentence in the State's prison, could in justice or reason claim, on that account, at the hands of the state, a palace for his abode and a princely pension for his maintenance ever after. And yet you talk of the sinner's demanding heaven as his just due, simply because he has suffered the punishment of his sins; and sneer and flout in the face of Universalists that "their's is a Christless system"; that there is no salvation in their scheme; "nor have they any thing to do with Christ or his atonement"! Think you there is no salvation but from punishment?—Think you there is no atonement but such as would consist in buying off a sinner from justice? It may well be doubted, then, whether you will find either in the volume of revelation.

In view of the imagined suspension of the penalty of eternal death, you exclaim in the fullness of your heart, "What a mercy this! For had the full penalty of the law been executed upon the transgressor, not only must he have been cut down in his sins, and become eternally miserable, but the existence of all his posterity must have been prevented." Perhaps this may be a great mercy to you, who happened to be born in a christian land, and are now permitted to enjoy the "glorious uncertainties" of Methodism; but it is quite possible had you been a Hindoo or a Hottentot, with

no prospect before you but the torments of an endless hell, the mercy of God in giving you existence would not appear so conspicuous: Nearly six thousand years have now elapsed since the transaction in Eden, and during all this period, generation after generation has appeared upon the stage and then passed away; and if your creed be true, ninety-nine of every hundred among the untold millions that have thus lived and died, have gone down to hell! "What a mercy this"! Even now three quarters of the globe are covered with heathenish darkness, its inhabitants alike ignorant of the "new trial for eternal life" and its conditions, without God and without hope in the world, and prospective heirs of eternal burnings. "What a mercy this"! And you yourself with all your flattering hopes; may yet, if heaven and hell are awarded as you believe and teach; "have to prove to your everlasting sorrow that the wages of sin is death." Would you then exclaim "What a mercy"?

But where do you find this doctrine that the penalty of the divine law was suspended? Not a lisp is heard in Genesis. Moses is as silent as the grave upon it: Not a sentence, not a word does he utter that can be tortured into proof of such a doctrine. On the very day that man sinned he was called to the tribunal of God, and judgment was pronounced upon him. Yet here was nothing said of the penalty or any part of the penalty being suspended. Not a hint is given of any such suspension. Nothing is said or intimated in the remotest manner of "eternal death"; nor indeed of temporal death as the penalty of the law. Man was informed, it is true, that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread till he returned unto the ground: but the cause of his mortality was distinctly referred to the earthly elements of which he was composed, and not to the sin of which he had been guilty. "For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." The Bible gives us no light, no information with respect to this suspended penalty: No allusion is made to it in all the inspired volume; and yet you talk of it as a well known and acknowledged truth; so well known indeed, and so acknowledged, that you do not trouble yourself to give, or your reader to examine, a single proof. Not an attempt even is made on your part to furnish a particle of evidence of its truth. You assert it with sufficient confidence, I acknowledge, and on that assertion rest your cause. And is this the way that the horrible dogma of endless

misery is to be bolstered up? It may do, Mr. Remington, with some of your Methodist brethren who possess an easy credulity; it may pass in the conventicle as good doctrine, but thinking people, believe me, even among your own fraternity, must feel the insult that you offer to their understandings, when you thus tender them your own *ipse dixit* instead of the express word of God. They ask for bread and you give him a stone. They ask for truth, the truth of God, and you repeat to them the falsehood of the serpent; and then to make that falsehood plausible, you talk of the suspended penalty of God's law, of which God himself has said nothing. So dear to your heart is the doctrine of endless misery that you will make any sacrifice, you will resort to any artifice, rather than relinquish it. Am I too severe? If I am, pardon me. But "let God be true."

Of the rest of your observations upon your first proposition I have little to say. The doctrines, if I am not mistaken, were chiefly borrowed from Dr. John Taylor, of Norwich, Eng. and may perhaps be made to harmonize with the doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church. But of this I have serious doubts. Your friend Mr. Amos Belden is familiar with them, and probably knows how they found a place in your lectures.

I however admire the ingenuity displayed in this part of your labors. When God pronounced the curse upon the serpent, that the seed of the woman should bruise his head, you perceive the dawning of the gospel, and thenceforward every part of the divine sentence upon our first parents (Gen. iii. 16—19) was, to your eye, radiant with its glory. Even temporal death, a part of the original penalty, became a blessing, and sufferings and sorrows were appointments made under grace. But there is a mystery here. "These allotments, therefore, are not penal," you say, "inasmuch as they were made under grace and therefore not as punishments for our sins." There is then no proper punishment, no infliction of the penalty in this world, and the curse which God pronounced was a blessing. But what do you understand by a penalty or punishment? Is it something that grows out of revenge, the offspring of that terrible and undivine attribute, "vindictive justice"; something that has no regard to the good of the punished, but finds its end in unqualified and useless misery? If such be your conceptions of pen-

alty, how, I ask could spiritual and temporal death ever make a part of it?

But what you have to say on this part of the subject is irrelevant to the question before us, and I shall therefore omit all farther remark. There are some evils in this life which I regard as punishments of sin; if they are not so the Bible is clearly untrue. There are others which I cannot but look upon as evils incident to our physical nature, and to which we are subject in common with all the various tribes of living creatures upon the earth. But that there is any unmixed evil in the universe, any thing which God cannot and will not, in his wonder-working providence, overrule for good, I neither know nor have the slightest reason for believing. The whole economy of God is an economy of adorable grace. "God is love." Love shone forth in the morning of creation; love has displayed itself in every period of the past, and is becoming more and more radiant as the great purposes of the Deity are developed; and love shall impart the crowning glory to the grand consummation of the divine plan, when death shall have been abolished, and the serpent destroyed, and sin annihilated, and GOD SHALL BE ALL IN ALL; for then "shall he rest in his love"—its objects accomplished, its wishes attained.

May God in his mercy grant you better views of his character and government, and lead you to pray with fervent desire, and faith unfeigned, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done."

I am as ever yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER IX.

Dear Sir—I shall now proceed to consider your second proposition. In this it is your business to show that the penalty of the law will be inflicted in a future state of being.

We have before seen what ill success attended your labors to prove that the divine penalty was suspended. That point was made out, if at all, on your bare assertion; for in the twenty pages devoted to that subject, I have sought in vain for a single appeal to the inspired volume. The whole theory is one of human making, and to sustain it the word of God must be frittered away, and the falsehood of the serpent converted into a most wholesome and glorious truth.

The proposition before us is predicated upon the preceding one. If you failed in establishing that, this falls to the ground of itself. But I shall glance at your argument, not that it is necessary to refute it in order to defend Universalism, but merely to show you that the case is not so clear as you may perhaps imagine. Future punishment may be true, but I do not believe you have proved it.

I am amused at the oddity of your proposition. "This inevitable penalty," you say, "will be executed upon the finally impenitent in a future state of existence." The penalty is *inevitable*, and yet it can be, and will be, *avoided* by all but the finally impenitent! And perhaps even they will escape, for you tell us, p. 53, that "God visits incorrigible sinners"—who, I imagine, are about as intractable subjects as the finally impenitent—"God visits incorrigible sinners, individually and nationally, with judgments, that they may be led to repentance!"

To prove that the wicked will be punished in a future state, you introduce no less than nine arguments, chiefly borrowed from your brethren, the Rev. Messrs. Merritt, Lee, and Scott. Unfortunately, however, your proofs, like the witnesses against

Jesus, agree not together. The truth is, in making up your book, sufficient care was not taken to avoid contradictions, and it so happens that, if your favorite authors were individually consistent with themselves, they are mutually destructive to each other.

Your first argument in favor of future punishment is borrowed from Mr. Lee. This gentleman has discovered a method by which he is enabled to reduce any Universalist who will stand his ground, in a moment. The battery which is thus fatally brought to bear upon us, admits however of but one direction, and in case of the worst, we only need to change our position slightly in order to avoid the threatened ruin, and then all his mighty preparation becomes a dead loss. But let us examine this engine of death. The argument before us is simply this: "Universalists," according to Mr. Lee, "contend that the object of all divine punishment is to reform the sufferer." This he is careful to inform us the Methodists do not admit; but if it be admitted, then one of three consequences must follow, viz. either every sinner must be reformed in this life, or punishment must fail to accomplish its end, or lastly, it must be continued in a future state. Now to imagine that punishment reforms every sinner in this world is, in the opinion of Mr. Lee, out of the question. To say that it fails to reform, is for the Universalist to relinquish his position and concede that it is not corrective, or else that it must be continued in order to accomplish in a future state what it did not accomplish here.

But what does Mr. Lee mean by corrective punishment, or punishment reforming the sinner? I make this inquiry in no spirit of cavilling; for if I am not mistaken, Mr. Lee and Universalists are speaking of two very distinct things under the same name. If by reforming, or corrective, or disciplinary punishment is meant a punishment which always or ever in itself restores a man to true holiness, and thus fits him for heaven, the Universalist denies its very existence. There is no such thing in the government of God. If there were, punishment would hold the place assigned in that government to our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus annihilate the gospel; or ra-

ther, perhaps, evolve the gospel from the very bosom of the law, and make itself essentially homogenous with the richest displays of divine grace in the sufferings and death of a Mediator. In such punishment Universalists have, they can have, no faith whatever. And yet it is of such, that Mr. Lee, if I do not misunderstand him, here speaks.

What then, it may be asked, do you mean by corrective or reforming punishment? I answer: Punishment obviously holds a place in the government of God, and an important but not the highest place. It was never designed to sanctify the heart or purge the conscience, that is, to give man a complete victory over his appetites and passions. This was reserved for the gospel. For "who is he that overcometh the world," inquires the beloved disciple, "but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" The office of punishment is a lower one. It was not designed so much to make man *holy*, as to render him *less sinful*. It restrains him in the indulgence of his passions, lessens the number and turpitude of his sins, and by seconding the voice of conscience, tends to fit him for the reception of better principles and a holier influence. Punishment alone cannot make a man a christian or form a soul for heaven; but it can keep him back from crimes, which, without it, he would have perpetrated, and from depths of depravity to which he would otherwise have sunk. Its influence, though great, is rather negative than positive, while grace triumphs in the sanctification of the heart.

Considered in this light, it may be doubted, if punishment ever fails of accomplishing good; not the highest good certainly, but a good subservient to the divine benevolence, and tending toward that which is spiritual and divine. And is Mr. Lee quite certain that every sinner is not adequately punished and reformed, as far as punishment is designed to reform, in this life? I know he speaks on this subject with great confidence, and assures us that "both Scripture and matter of fact abundantly declare" the contrary. He adduces instances in which men appear to die sinning and unrepentant. But he judges merely "according to the appearance," with little or no positive knowledge on the subject. He neither knows the in-

dividual's demerits, nor how much he is punished, nor yet what effect the punishment has upon him. "For aught we know," says Mr. Remington, "our heavenly Father may afflict us even unto death to humble us for our sins and bring us to repent and seek him." And for aught that Mr. Remington or Mr. Lee knows, this may be the case with every sinner in the world.

If future punishment can be proved from revelation, the Universalist must relinquish his opinions on the subject. But until this is done, something more is necessary to persuade him of the doctrine than an appeal to his acknowledged short-sightedness and ignorance. But Mr. Lee must not beg his question, as he does in the argument before us, by predicating the conclusion on premises lying beyond the sphere of possible proof. It is not enough to say, "We do not see all men reformed in this world; therefore they are not reformed." If Mr. Lee can prove future punishment, he can do it by something besides this argument, which is not proof, and is therefore here out of place.

Your second proof is also borrowed from Mr. Lee. Though more acute, it is not less indirect than the preceding. "The Scriptures," says your friend, "teach that the punishment of the wicked is longer than man's entire earthly existence, and if so, it must follow that such punishment is in a future state." To prove this, Mr. Lee quotes two classes of scripture texts, one of which represents human life as very short, speaking of it as "grass," or "the flower of grass," or as "a vapor that appeareth for a little season and then vanisheth away;" while the other calls punishment "everlasting," and "forever and ever." Now, says our author, "everlasting punishment must be longer than a life that is as a vapor," and "everlasting destruction must be longer than the life of a man whose days upon earth are as a shadow."

But did it never occur to you or your coadjutor, that this kind of reasoning is quite liable to deceive your readers if not indeed yourselves? It is possible, and even proper, to speak of the same period of time as long or short, as it may happen to be directly or indirectly compared with other periods of

unequal duration. A life of seventy years is very short, when compared with eternity; it is even as a flower or as grass over which the wind passeth and it is gone. But seventy years of war, or famine, or pestilence would be long in comparison with the ordinary duration of such scourges. A single twelve month of violent and unremitting tooth-ache would seem to the poor sufferer like an age; and if the pain experienced in a single tooth were extended to every nerve in the human system, thus indefinitely multiplying the agony, an hour would seem a year, and a year would be thought almost an eternity.

Adopting Mr. Lee's method, the Bible itself would present us some strange contradictions. Thus man, who in one instance is said to be "of few days," is in another exhorted to keep the commandments, with the assurance that they shall give him "length of days and long life." Thus also Moses gives directions for making one of those beings whose life is "a vapor," a "servant forever." And the Psalmist speaks of the good man who, notwithstanding his "days upon earth are a shadow," shall "not be moved forever."

The prophet Jonah says, "The earth with her bars was about me forever;" and yet he was in the whale's belly but three days and three nights. The Babylonish captivity was called everlasting, though it continued but seventy years; and the present punishment of the ill-fated Jews is frequently, I might say generally, designated in the same manner. It is worthy of remark, however, that this everlasting punishment does not fall everlastingly upon the same individual. The Jews of apostolic times were punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Their city was razed to its very foundations, multitudes perished miserably in the siege and capture, and the poor remnant, were scattered over the earth, a by-word and a hissing among all nations.—From that time to the present, generation after generation of that unhappy race has tasted of the bitter cup, and looked toward the site of their once holy city, and wept over its desolations, and mourned that the face of God is turned away from his people. And notwithstanding the dreams of benevolent

enthusiasts, the day seems far distant in the future, when "all Israel shall be saved." An apostle speaks of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah as being set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire; and yet there is no reason to suppose that they are eternally suffering, nor is the language so interpreted by the best commentators. So in the case before us, men may be punished with a punishment called everlasting, and yet suffer a period much less than that of ordinary human life.

The third argument in favor of future punishment to which you call attention, is derived "from the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in this life." You conclude, "if there be a God, he must be just, and render to every man according to his works." But human experience, you say, plainly shows that he does not do this in the present world.— You also quote a couple of pages from Dick's "Philosophy of a Future State," to the same purpose.

That there are *apparent* inequalities in the distribution of rewards and punishments here, will be readily conceded. But there is a difference between what is apparent and what is real; between what we see and what we do not see. Must we take the doctrine of future punishment for granted, because we cannot *see* how every man is adequately punished here? If this be a legitimate method of reasoning, we need only appeal to our ignorance to prove any thing whatever; and the more ignorant we are the more conclusive the argument!

There is one fact however which deserves attention on this subject. It is, that notwithstanding all the apparent inequality of rewards and punishments in this world, there is no truly good man living, who would not almost infinitely prefer the condition of the righteous to that of the wicked, even if there were no future state at all. So true is God's word, that the righteous have great peace, while there is no peace to the wicked.

But will you allow me to hint that you possess a very treacherous memory. It is but a few pages back that you were insisting at great length, under the guidance of Dr. Taylor of Norwich, that "our appointments to suffering and mortality

are designed for our benefit," that they "are not penal," "not to punish us for our sins, but to save our souls," that they are "a kindness," that is, "disciplinary chastisements" well suited to our fallen condition, and designed to lead us back to God. And now under the influence of more orthodox teachers you are about to prove a future state of endless misery from the fact that God grants to the good, in common with the evil, a participation of these "benefits"! Yea, you complain of God as not just because he employs the same means to *save the souls* of a good and a bad man! Would you indeed have him load the wicked exclusively with those sufferings which you call "a kindness," and "which," you tell us, "are well qualified to impress upon man's mind the heinous nature of sin; to wean his affections from the world, and to lead him back to that God from whom he had strayed." If there be any truth in your theory, the multiplied sufferings of the good would rather prove them the especial favorites of heaven. And if there be any truth in the Bible it is that God "rewards every man according to his works."

But I must close. There are several other points the consideration of which I must defer till another time.

I am as ever yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER X.

Dear Sir—Your fourth argument for future punishment is drawn "from the fact that the present life is a state of probation." But a state of probation implies—according to Mr. Scott, from whom you borrowed the argument and illustration—a time of review, "when the probationers will be rewarded or punished according to their works." Such a review cannot take place, however, "till the state of trial is *finished*," and this, we are told, "generally lasts as long as *their lives*." Hence "the threatened penalty, as well as the

promised prize is placed at the end of life." You yourself add that "a man is not properly punishable for the non-performance of a work assigned him until the time allowed him for its performance has expired."

The first observation which I shall here make is, that an admirable harmony subsists between this and the preceding argument. Under the last head you inferred future punishment from "the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments in this life." Here, however, you infer the same doctrine from the fact that there is, and from the very nature of probation, there can be nothing like rewards and punishments in this world at all! Men are not properly punishable till the season of their probation has expired! This reminds one of Dr. Fisk's pungent and classical remark, that Universalism, "like the fabled Hydra of antiquity, has many heads, and when one is cut off there are others left, and when these are assailed the former springs up anew." The only difference in the case seems to be this, that your Hydra imparts to each of its many heads the rare and unnatural faculty of snapping off all the rest, which leaves the monster at last but a headless trunk!

The *morality* of this doctrine of probation is also worthy of admiration. Tell a man, in the words of Rev. Mr. Scott, that "this present life is not a state of retribution;" impress upon his mind that he has nothing to fear in this world, but on the contrary much to hope, from a course of transgression; instruct him, in the language of the same approved divine, that "no one can *finally* fail till the *last sands* of his probation are run out," i. e. till his natural life is ended—and if you can make the depraved heart believe this mass of damnable falsehood, you have laid the foundation for no ordinary villain! He must be a poor knave indeed if he cannot resolve to repent before he dies, and if he does but this he is safe for eternity; and with this salvo to his conscience, he is prepared for any and every crime. The world has lately been instructed by some splendid specimens of the fruit of this moral simeon. Ordinary crimes, the outbreaks of common sinners, were for a time forgotten, when it beheld adultery and murder glooming forth from under sacerdotal vestments!

This world not a state of retribution!—man not properly punishable during this life! Then the Bible is false; and God is unjust; and the world's history is a fable, and all human experience a lie. Then poor Cain was wretchedly mistaken when in the very presence of Jehovah, he cried out in the bitterness of his soul, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." And most pitiable indeed was the ignorance of the Psalmist when he said, "Verily, he is a God that judgeth in the earth." But why do I refer to the Scriptures? Who but the man that had a point to make out, could ever read the Bible and yet pretend that God does not reward and punish men here?

There is one point more that I must not omit to notice. In the argument before us we are informed who the *finally impenitent* are, upon whose heads alone the inevitable penalty of God's law is ultimately to fall. They are such as die unrepentant—"the last sands of whose probation are run out."

But when a man's probation is ended, his character must of course be fixed; not fixed naturally by the strength of principle, as in the case of just men made perfect, but by dire necessity; fixed by all opportunity for reformation or farther improvement being suddenly cut off, and the free moral agent stripped of his agency, and ushered into a state in its very nature changeless! But this beauty of Methodism you have before pointedly denied. You say, p. 27, "The Scriptures teach us that God has made man a moral being, and furnished him with every requisite for his holiness and happiness as such; that he will make him just as holy and happy as he can consistent with his word, and with that important principle of his government which recognizes man as a free moral agent; and that he will never deprive him of this necessary constituent of his moral nature for the purpose of making him either holy and happy or sinful and miserable." Now the scene is changed, and man's free agency is to end with his natural life! "This necessary constituent of his moral nature" of which God "will never deprive him," proves to be as "a vapor that appeareth for a little season and then vanisheth away." Alas, for consistency! This glorious bangle of Methodist free agen-

oy seems to have been introduced for the mere purpose of serving as a pretext for the damnation of nine-tenths of our race. Only assert that man is a free agent, though this agency lasts but *an hour or a day*, or at most, as Mr. Lee will have it, during a period which the Scriptures represent as "very short"—only assert that man is a free agent, though that agency is withdrawn the very next breath after it is given, and you can easily justify the ways of God in damning to endless torments a whole universe! This is the grand theological panacea, that is to cure all the infidelity and heresy in the world. This is the wonder-working charm that is to reconcile the human mind to cruelty and injustice and perfidy beyond all parallel, and transform the character of God, that would otherwise be black as night, into the splendors and glories of noon-day! I congratulate your Church on the possession of such a mighty truth, such a resolver of all human doubts and difficulties; and I doubly congratulate you upon your power of making man a free agent *for ever*, or *for a moment* just as may best suit your purpose! Still, being such a heretic as I am, I cannot avoid asking you to stop an instant to shed one tear at the thought of man's deprivation of this "necessary constituent of his moral nature." Alas! it is gone, vanished into thin air, lost in smoke, and the glorious consummation of Methodist freedom is a *fatalism* as rigid and infinitely more hopeless than that of the coldest philosophy on earth! Go on, my dear sir, to sing the praises of probation and free agency; but never forget again that both are to end with life, and that the wicked are then to be transmuted into most inglorious *machines* destitute of "moral nature," and are thenceforward to spend an eternity, in cursing God without *moral* wrong, and in suffering punishment without *moral* character!

"The doctrine of future punishment," you tell us in the fifth place, "is evident from the distinction which the Scriptures make between virtue and vice, or holiness and sin." This may be "evident" to you, but I must confess it is not so to me. Virtue, you say, secures the approbation of God, and vice his disapprobation, "in time and eternity." "Do away with the punishment of vice," you add, "and you do away with *vice id-*

self. Acknowledge the reward of virtue in this and the future world, and you not only acknowledge its existence, but that vice must be punished also."

This is really delightful. It is not a page back, that you were arguing that from the nature of probation there can be neither rewards nor punishments in this life; that this world is not "a state of retribution," but that "the threatened penalty, as well as the promised prize, is placed at the end of life." Now the whole argument is reversed: and we are gravely told that if we do away with the punishment of vice we do away with *vice itself*. Of course there is no vice in this world, because there is no punishment here! But this is not your meaning. You are now for the second or third time contending that this world is "a state of retribution;" and that virtue and vice, as "perfect opposites, both in their nature and consequences," are rewarded and punished "in time and eternity." How unspeakably convenient is this shifting of scenes! When it suits your purpose this life is a state of probation only; there is no punishment here: again when it suits your purpose, this life becomes a state of retribution; and what is most fortunate, you prove future punishment from both facts with equal facility.

The argument before us, however, possesses no force only on one supposition, viz. that the Universalist concedes that virtue is rewarded both "in this and the future world." The Universalist that makes this concession will probably not hesitate to acknowledge that vice is also punished in the future state as well as in the present, and I shall therefore leave him to your "tender mercies."

We now rise to a higher kind of proof. You say in the sixth place that, "Future punishment is certain from the fact that wicked men do not suffer in this world all that their sins deserve and all that justice requires. That they do, has never been proved to the satisfaction of the serious and candid part of the community."

But it is only on the preceding page of your lectures, that you affirm, that man is not punished here at all, and indeed is not properly punishable till his probation has expired! Is it

not strange, Mr. Remington, that you cannot determine whether we are punished in this world in any degree whatever, or not? If you could once settle that point with yourself you would be in a much fairer way to prove future punishment.

But it "has never yet been proved" that "wicked men suffer in this world all that their sins deserve and all that justice requires." Indeed! Has it ever been proved that they do not? You assert that future punishment is certain, because the wicked are not adequately punished in this life; but it is not my business to prove a negative.

What then are the facts on which you rest your assertion? You answer in the words of Mr. Scott, that wicked men are not adequately punished in this world, either in *their outward circumstances, in their bodies, or in their souls*. As to their uncomfortable circumstances, and outward afflictions, Mr. Scott tells us, "the righteous have, and always have had as large, if not a much larger portion than the wicked. Here the righteous receive their '*evil things*,' and the wicked their '*good things*.'" And as to diseases and pains of body, he thinks there need not a word be said. The righteous have their full share! And in respect to their souls, the wicked have greatly the advantage, inasmuch as the righteous possess a very tender conscience, while there is "a class of wicked men who suffer no pain or remorse of conscience at all." According to this representation, the condition of the wicked, so far as this world is concerned, is much to be preferred!—Against such a doctrine as this I will not stoop to argue. If the Bible does not settle the fact that the "pure in heart are blessed," that the righteous are far the most happy, even in this life, then will I acknowledge that there is peace to the wicked, and that sinners, if not wise, are at least very shrewd, since they can secure so much more happiness in sin here, and by timely repentance can ultimately be taken "unwhipt of justice" to the joys of heaven! The moral bearings of this doctrine are too obvious to require particular mention.

The next argument for future misery is founded on certain "descriptions which the Scriptures give of the punishment of the wicked." They are such as, "Indignation and wrath, tri-

bulation and anguish"—"the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance"—"the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"—"outer darkness"—"weeping and gnashing the teeth"—"their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched"—and "unquenchable fire."—"Who can suppose," says Mr. Lee, or somebody else whom you quote, "who can suppose that these descriptions belong to punishment befalling sinners generally in this life?"

That one of these expressions may refer to the punishment of sinners *generally*, is barely possible; but that the rest, were applied to special and uncommon judgments is too obvious to escape the observation of any honest reader. Is it fair then to take such descriptions and insist that they must be applicable to "sinners generally in this life," or else that they must be referred to the future, and received as positive proofs of future punishment? In the first place you assume what is false in fact, that these expressions are used to describe ordinary and general punishments; and in the next place, what you cannot prove, and do not attempt to prove, viz. that these descriptions are not applicable to any punishments in this world. When you shall have given any substance to these ar-rant assumptions, it will be time to take up the defensive; and then it will be no difficult task to show that these very expressions and others similar and equivalent to them, are employed in describing judgments properly temporal. Of this you may satisfy yourself, if you will but take the trouble to study the Old Testament Scriptures with any tolerable care, and interpret this phraseology of the New in their light. Say what you will of these expressions being "too forcible and emphatic to come from the pen of the most impassioned poet;" say what you will of the improbability that "the Holy Ghost ever dictated descriptions so far from the sober truth;" sober fact, the palpable reality of which every well instructed divine is fully conscious, and which every honest theologian cannot but acknowledge, must convince you that these very terms, or others equivalent to them are used in the Scriptures with reference to punishments belonging exclusively to this world.

I am with due respects, THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XI.

Dear Sir—Your eighth argument in favor of future punishment, is predicated on what the Scriptures say with respect to the place where the wicked will be punished. Mr. Lee, whom you here quote, says, "They associate with the punishment of the wicked the idea of a place or locality in a manner that forbids the supposition that it is endured in this life. Hell is referred to as a place of punishment not in this world, but in a future state." Whether with a local hell, Mr. Lee believes in a lake of literal fire and brimstone, where, Dives-like, they suffer an intolerable thirst and are tormented in flame, or in a place of such intense cold as shall produce weeping and gnashing of teeth, or whether he believes in a hell such as Milton and some other poets describe, and such as Dr. Clarke seemed much inclined to adopt, which combines the "fierce extremes" of both fire and frost, he does not inform us.

We here come to a most scholar-like examination of the four words generally rendered *hell* in our common version, and a most masterly refutation of the labors of the Rev. Mr. Balfour on this subject. The Rev. Mr. Lee, from whom, without "always giving credit," you have borrowed this argument, as well as the greater part of the imposing array of learned authorities which supports it, frankly confesses that he cannot review Mr. Balfour's work in the limited space which he has prescribed to himself: but fortunately enough he thinks this unnecessary, as he believes the matter may be settled in a few pages! I have read with great care the twenty pages which he has allotted to the subject, as well as the five pages of your lectures, and, though I regret to give either him or you the least cause of pain, I must honestly confess that in my poor judgment, this short-hand method of yours has not succeeded a whit better than the former and more laborious plan pursued by the Rev. Mr. Sabine, the Rev. Dr. Allen, the late Rev. Bernard Whitman, and Prof. Stuart! You will not expect me.

therefore to enter into a very protracted discussion of this topic. I shall merely glance at what you seem to think sufficient to settle the matter beyond the reach of cavil.

You first take up the Hebrew word *Sheol*, and tell us very candidly that in the opinion of Dr. Campbell, "this word universally denotes the state of the dead in general, without regard to their virtuous or vicious character and conduct, or to their happiness or misery." And what have you opposed to his authority on this subject? Merely a loose and groundless observation of Dr. Adam Clarke, that *Sheol* signifies "sometimes any deep pit, or even *hell* itself." This testimony of the good Dr. is backed, indeed, by the pious Matthew Henry, as also by Alexander Cruden, the redoubtable "Corrector," better known as the author of a very good Concordance to the English Bible. Now it might have occurred to you, and to your friend Mr. Lee, had you been very familiar with the nature of the subject and the relative value of authorities, that the opinion of Cruden and Matthew Henry here was not worth the paper on which it was expressed; and that even the observation of Dr. Clarke, unsupported as it is by a single passage where the word signifies "hell itself," is not calculated to carry conviction to any mind. To say that *Sheol* sometimes signifies "hell itself," is a thing very easily done, and there are few men who better know how to say such things than Dr. Clarke. But to prove such a saying true, is not so easily accomplished; and of this the Doctor would have been quite sensible had he made the attempt.

Gesenius, the most distinguished Hebrew scholar and lexicographer of the present day, defines *Sheol* to be "the under world; a vast subterranean place, full of thick darkness, in which are congregated the shades of the dead;" but he does not support Dr. Clarke's assertion that it signifies "hell itself." Jahn, another German scholar and theologian of no mean name, speaks in his *Archæology*, of *Sheol* in the same manner as does Gesenius, and says explicitly that it cannot be proved by direct testimony that "the Hebrews believed that there was a difference in their situation in *Sheol* between the good and the bad." Prof. Stuart of Andover, who has devoted

much time and attention to this subject, and written a labored Essay upon it, and who, let it be remembered, was extremely anxious to make out the very point which Dr. Clarke took for granted, says, "The sum of the evidence from the Old Testament in regard to *Sheol*, is that the Hebrews did probably in some cases connect with the use of this word, the idea of misery subsequent to the death of the body. It seems to me," he adds, "that we can safely believe this; and to aver more than this would be somewhat hazardous when all the examples of the word are duly considered." Any one who is disposed to see the weakness of this *probability*, is referred to Mr. Balfour's Reply to Stuart. He will there find, unless I am greatly mistaken, that there is not the shadow of evidence that *Sheol* ever means hell, or implies a place of future punishment.

- You next consider the Greek word *Hades*. You say "Dr. Campbell remarks, 'that this term means the receptacle of the dead, and ought *rarely* to be translated *hell*, in the sense in which we now use that word to signify a place of torment.' " From whom you borrowed this pretended quotation from Campbell, I know not. I am charitable enough, however, to think that you have never read him yourself, and have therefore been imposed upon, by some ignorant or mischievous friend. Be that as it may, I am quite certain that Campbell makes no such remark as you ascribe to him. Speaking of *Hades* he says, "In my opinion it ought *never* in Scripture to be rendered *hell*, at least in the sense in which that word is now universally understood by Christians."

But what proof do you adduce that *Hades* is ever used in the Scriptures to signify hell? Here Dr. Clarke appears again, who tells us that this word answers "to *Sheol* in Hebrew, implying often, 1st, the grave; 2dly, the state of separate souls, or the unseen world of spirits, whether of torment or in general." In another place he informs us that *Hades* was a general term among Greek writers by which they expressed this state [the state of the dead] and this *Hades* was Tartarus to the wicked and Elysium to the good." The question, however, is not what the Greek writers employed the word to mean, but whether it ever bears this meaning in the Scriptures.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus furnishes the only instance where such a signification of the word can be pretended in the Bible. And here, I am very willing to confess, it bears it fully : and why should it not ? For the descriptions, or imagery of this parable, as Dr. Macknight acknowledges, " are not drawn from the writings of the Old Testament, but have a remarkable affinity to the descriptions which the Grecian poets have given." And Dr. Lightfoot, a scholar scarcely less familiar with classic than with Jewish writers, does not hesitate to say that " according to this common [heathen] opinion, Christ frames his parable." Now it would be well for us to remember that our Savior borrowed these popular but heathen descriptions of *Hades*, not for the purpose of placing upon them the seal of divine truth, but because the Jews from their long intercourse with the Greeks and Romans had become familiar with them, and these common notions were therefore suitable materials to inweave in the texture of a parable.

The language of Mr. Groves, whom you, or rather Mr. Lee, quoted, has been entirely misunderstood. " According to the christian doctrine," says Mr. Groves, *Hades* signifies " the invisible place of spirits, the unseen place of souls, the place of the dead generally : but *vulgarly*, a place of torment ; the abode of the damned." You will perceive that his definition " according to the christian doctrine" does not include the idea you are wishing to make out ; and it is only the *vulgar* definition, which is unlike the former, that suits your purpose.

I am at a loss to determine why you omitted all mention of the testimony of Josephus, which Mr. Lee has introduced with so much effect. It is impossible that you should have suspected that this famous " Discourse to the Greeks concerning *Hades*," was a gross forgery, though the discourse itself appears as if it might better be from some Greek to Josephus. I am not now able to say when that piece was written, but it is very obvious that it was written after the New Testament, and it is certain that it was never written by the pen of Josephus.

You next lead us to the word *Tartarus*. This word occurs but once in the scriptures, 2 Peter ii. 4 ; and then as a denom-

inative verb, as it is called. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to (*Tartarus*) hell," &c. The definitions of this word which you copy from Mr. Lee are correct. Tartarus is in the Greek mythology the place of future punishment, as Mr. Groves properly calls it, "the hell of the poets." The question is not about the meaning of the word, but about its application. It is yet to be proved that the Apostle employed this word in describing any matter of fact. There is great reason to believe that he alluded to the popular story or tradition of fallen angels, without in the least degree intending to vouch for its truth. This, as Dr. Lardner informs us, was no unusual thing among the ancient christians, and several examples of it occur in the New Testament. What for instance is Paul's allusion to Jannes and Jambres, or Jude's mention of Michael contending with the devil about the body of Moses, but such a reference to popular or well known traditions of this kind? But did these Apostles mean to assert the historical truth of such traditions? He who will answer this question in the affirmative will find that he has not counted the cost.

It is a fact, I suppose, beyond dispute, that the Scriptures furnish no evidence, or even a hint of the fall of angels till we come to the 2d Epistle of Peter. Yet here the Apostle spoke of it as something well known, though he spoke of what was no doctrine of revelation and in language that finds no analogy in the Scriptures. This story of the fall of angels, with all the particulars, the cause, the time, the being bound and cast into darkness, and reserved to the day of judgment, &c., may be found, if I am not mistaken, in the apocryphal book of Enoch—a book that was either in the hands of both Peter and Jude, and to which they alluded, or which has been forged to quadrate with the popular traditions to which the Apostles referred. In either case the use of the word *Tartarus* in the passage under consideration furnishes no proof that there is a place of future punishment; but only that the heathen, and in the later periods of their national existence, the Jews also believed, or spoke as if they believed such a doctrine.

We come lastly to the word *Gehenna*. This, as all agree,

was the name of "the valley of Hinnom," south of Jerusalem, once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch, and afterward polluted with every species of filth as well as the carcases of animals and dead bodies of malefactors; to consume which, in order to avert the pestilence that such a mass of corruption would occasion, constant fires were kept burning." "Hence came the expression," says Prof. Stuart, "Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

So far the case is plain; but now the advocates of future and endless punishment contend that "in process of time this place came to be considered an emblem of hell, or the place of torment reserved for the punishment of the wicked in a future state." But this is to be proved, and it is the very thing that occasions all the difficulty. The Universalist contends and undertakes to prove that the word is always to be understood, 1st in its literal sense, as signifying the valley of Hinnom and its punishments, or 2ndly in a figurative sense as denoting, or descriptive of, temporal punishments, which although not inflicted in the valley of Hinnom, were from their character and circumstances appropriately and emphatically designated by that name. When our Savior, for instance, said to the Scribes and Pharisees, "How can ye escape the damnation of hell, *Gehenna*?" the question imports no more than, How can ye escape the terrible judgments about to fall on this wicked city and nation; judgments in which all Jerusalem shall be like the valley of Hinnom, and your sufferings resemble those of the most notorious malefactors?

But you say, "there is no evidence that criminals were executed in the days of our Savior, or at any subsequent period by being burnt in the valley of Hinnom." "That the Jews were accustomed to execute criminals in this way in our Savior's time, there is," says Prof. Stuart, "no certain proof. The allusion, however, in Matt. v. 22, seems almost necessarily to imply that such was the fact." And your favorite critic, Dr. A. Clarke, says on this passage, "It is very probable that our Lord means no more here than this; If a man charge another with apostacy from the Jewish religion, or rebellion against God, and cannot prove his charge, then he is exposed

to that punishment (*burning alive*) which the other must have suffered, if the charge had been substantiated." And at the close of his note he speaks of this punishment again as "the being *burnt alive* in the valley of the Son of Hinnom. This appears to be the meaning of our Lord."

The error into which you fall is in combatting an opinion which nobody holds, viz., that Universalists believe that Gehenna is always to be understood and interpreted in a literal sense. The real difference between our views on this subject is probably just this: We both believe in a figurative, or as Prof. Stuart calls it, "a *secondary or spiritual* sense," of the word *Gehenna*. Universalists, however, believe that this sense applies to punishments in this world, which they are able abundantly to prove. Our opposers believe that it is applied to punishment in a future world, which they cannot prove at all.

But I have already spent more time upon this subject than Mr. Lee's discussion, or your abstract of it, demands. It is not a matter to be settled, as your favorite author imagines, "in a few pages!" and least of all by the authority of such critics as Matthew Henry and Alexander Cruden, and by such lexicons as Mr. Groves', or Mr. Greenfield's Polymicrian. It is a subject, let me add, which you are incompetent to manage, and which Mr. Lee is unable to bring within your grasp. The learning and research which you here exhibit is puerile enough at best, and seems doubly so when we know that it is all borrowed, and borrowed too, with such a whole hearted confidence and fidelity, that you did not even correct your author's oversights and typographical errors. Does he refer to Samuel ii. 6; you cannot even afford to tell your readers whether he meant the *first* or *second* book of Samuel. Does he quote from Dr. Clarke that the word *Hades* is made up of the Greek, "*a*, not, and *ideim*, to see," you cannot stop or stoop to write *idein* for *ideim*. Indeed you will not, even for the sake of uniformity, change Mr. Lee's Roman letter in Greek words back into the proper Greek text, although when you quote other authors where the Greek letter is used your publishers show themselves quite able to "follow the copy."

I do not say that you are ignorant of the Greek alphabet and grammar, but with all your display of learning in these lectures, I find no evidence that you ever studied either.

I am as ever yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XII.

Dear Sir—I now proceed to your ninth and last argument in favor of the doctrine of future punishment. “The Scriptures,” you say, “teach that there is to be a day of judgment, when the whole human family will be judged and rewarded according to their characters or conduct in this life.”

This brings us back to the ground that this world is not a state of retribution, a ground that you have occupied and abandoned so frequently in your preceding reasonings on this subject. For if men are to be judged and rewarded in the future life for their conduct in this, then it is obvious that they are not judged and rewarded here. Of course man is free in this world, and free with a vengeance; free from all restraint and encouragement, free from all fear of punishment and hope of reward here. The result of this beautiful theory of probation is, that God exercises no government on the earth! True, he has given us the letter of a law, but it is without spirit, for its operation is suspended to some indefinite period in the future world. There, however, according to your theory, ample amends are to be made for all previous laxness in the government of God, and the rigors of eternity shall rectify the disorders of time. There “the whole human family will be judged and rewarded according to their characters or conduct in this life.”

Let us stop a moment and contemplate the result to which you have now brought us. In this world all is anarchy, for there is no judgment in the earth; no rewards or punishments are administered here, and of course to all practical purposes there is no government! This is the first step: and believe

not strange, Mr. Remington, that you cannot determine whether we are punished in this world in any degree whatever, or not? If you could once settle that point with yourself you would be in a much fairer way to prove future punishment.

But it "has never yet been proved" that "wicked men suffer in this world all that their sins deserve and all that justice requires." Indeed! Has it ever been proved that they do not? You assert that future punishment is certain, because the wicked are not adequately punished in this life; but it is not my business to prove a negative.

What then are the facts on which you rest your assertion? You answer in the words of Mr. Scott, that wicked men are not adequately punished in this world, either in *their outward circumstances, in their bodies, or in their souls*. As to their uncomfortable circumstances, and outward afflictions, Mr. Scott tells us, "the righteous have, and always have had as large, if not a much larger portion than the wicked. Here the righteous receive their '*evil things*,' and the wicked their '*good things*.'" And as to diseases and pains of body, he thinks there need not a word be said. The righteous *have* their full share! And in respect to their souls, the wicked have greatly the advantage, inasmuch as the righteous *possess* a very tender conscience, while there is "a class of wicked men who suffer no pain or remorse of conscience at all." According to this representation, the condition of the wicked, so far as this world is concerned, is much to be preferred!—

Against such a doctrine as this I will not stoop to argue. If the Bible does not settle the fact that the "pious are blessed," that the righteous are far the most happy even in this life, then will I acknowledge that there is no advantage to the wicked, and that sinners, if not wise, are at least fools, since they can secure so much more happiness by timely repentance can ultimately be taken up to the joys of heaven! The moral doctrine are too obvious to require particular notice. The next argument is "the descriptions which the Bible gives of the wicked." They are "Indigna

as if nothing is future which does not lie beyond the boundaries of time! You seem to forget that the same author who said that "God *shall bring every work into judgment*," said also, "The righteous *shall be recompensed in the earth*; much more the wicked and the sinner." That Christ's "judgment seat" is in the future world you adduce no evidence to prove; and you leave your readers to take for granted that "judgment to come" must be beyond the grave. This, it must be confessed, is an easy way of proving a general future judgment. Whenever you have leisure to show the just application of these texts to the subject before us, I shall be happy to consider it.

2. You next tell us that "the Scriptures limit the judgment to a period subsequent to death." This is proved by Heb. ix. 27: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." By inspecting the context, it will appear that the apostle was not here speaking of a future general judgment, but was drawing a parallel between the rites performed by the Jewish High Priests on the day of atonement, and the sacrifice of Jesus. The judgment of which he spoke seems to be the divine acceptance or rejection of the children of Israel in the person of their High Priest when he entered the Holy of Holies once every year in their behalf. You also quote 2 Cor. v. 10. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done." All the countenance which this passage gives to your cause is derived from a mis-translation. Dr. Macknight renders it thus: "We must all appear before the tribunal of Christ, that every man may receive things in the body according to what he hath done." This shows that the judgment seat or tribunal of Christ is in this world, and that he administers temporal awards and punishments, so that "he that soweth to the flesh shall of the *flesh* reap corruption."

3. In the third place you assert that "the Scriptures speak of former generations, and those who have been long dead, as reserved unto judgment." To sustain this position, you first quote Matt. x. 15: "It shall be more tolerable for the

land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city." For an exposition of this passage I would refer you to the Christian Messenger, Vol. iv. p. 317. I shall here only quote one or two of the authorities exhibited in that article. Dr. Hammond paraphrases this text thus: "I assure you the punishment that will light upon that city, shall be such, that the destruction of Sodom will appear to be more tolerable than that." Bp. Pierce says, "The sense of the verse seems to be this; that which formerly befell Sodom and Gomorrah was more tolerable than what shall befall this city." Dr. Adam Clarke and Gilbert Wakefield are to the same purpose. Your appeal to Rom. ii. 12—16, is also inconclusive. In the first place, the connexion of that passage is obscure and much disputed. In the second, there is no proof that the day in which God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, is in the future state; and lastly, it must not be taken for granted that the apostle speaks of former generations at all. What you say of the fallen angels being reserved unto judgment—the *judgment of the great day*, may pass for what it is worth. If you will read Lawrence's translation of the book of Enoch you will find the origin of this phraseology. In chap. x. the author of that book says, "The Lord said to Raphael, Bind Azazyel hand and foot; cast him into darkness; and opening the desert which is in Dudael, cast him in there. Throw upon him hurled and pointed stones; covering him with darkness; there shall he remain for ever; cover his face that he may not see the light. And in the *great day of judgment* let him be cast into the fire." Michael was also sent to "Samyaza" and to the other fallen angels, and was commanded to "bind them seventy generations underneath the earth, [that is, in Tartarus,] even to the day of judgment." If any one will trouble himself to compare this account with the allusion in 2 Peter ii. 4, and Jude 6, he will not doubt whence the apostles borrowed it.

There is an instance here of the manner in which you availed yourself of help, "always, however, giving credit." Here is a whole page, proposition, proofs, remarks and all, borrowed almost word for word, from Mr. Merritt, and you

have the magnanimity to give him credit for two lines, marking them with great care with the signs of quotation, and referring in the margin to "Rev. T. Merrit." This is what I call literary accuracy!

4. The fourth reason you offer for a future general judgment is that "the Scriptures teach that all men shall be judged." But are you not aware that those who deny a future general judgment believe that all men shall not only be judged, but also rewarded according to their works? This is one of the most prominent doctrines of those whom you call "non-retributionists," and whose system at the same time you call "Christless," merely because it encourages no man to hope that he may escape the just punishment of his sins.

Your criticism on the declaration that Christ is called "the judge of the quick and the dead," seems to me very questionable. "By the *quick*," you say, "we are to understand those who shall be alive upon earth at Christ's second coming. The dead shall then be raised, and then, together with the quick, shall be judged." Some very respectable commentators happen to think otherwise. Dr. Macknight and Dr. Adam Clarke understand the quick and the dead to mean the Jews and the Gentiles. "The Gentiles," says Dr. Clarke, "previously to the preaching of the gospel among them, were reckoned to be *dead in trespasses and sins*. The Jews had at least, by their religious profession, a name to live." A careful examination of all the places where the phrase occurs, would probably satisfy one that by the *quick*, the apostles meant true christians, those who were *spiritually alive*; and by the *dead* such as were yet in a state of *unconversion and sin*.

5. Your fifth argument is that "the Scriptures teach that the human family shall be judged at *one time*, or on an appointed day." Whether you would be understood to mean a day of twenty-four hours, I am unable to determine. It is not saying any thing, I hope, with which you are not already familiar, to observe that the term *day* is used with great latitude of signification in the Holy Scriptures. Sometimes it means a period of twenty-four or even twelve hours, and sometimes a season of indefinite length. Thus the gospel dispensation is

called "the day of salvation." Moreover, it is worthy of remark, that to *judge* does not always signify what we are apt to understand by it. Sometimes it obviously means to exercise the rule or authority of a governor or king. Thus when it is said that God "hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness" by Jesus Christ, the meaning is simply this, that God has laid the government upon his shoulder, and that now Jesus Christ reigns over, as he is the constituted Lord and Savior of, all. This judging, instead of being a source of alarm and terror, is the occasion of the highest joy. See Ps. xvi. 9—13, and xcvi. 4—9, where all nature is called upon to show demonstrations of joy before the Lord; "for he cometh," says the Psalmist, "he cometh to judge [i. e. to govern] the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth." This season of gospel judgment was properly enough called the *last day*, inasmuch as it was the closing or final dispensation of the divine economy on earth.

G. Your last argument in favor of a future general judgment, is that "the Scriptures speak of the day of judgment with its concomitants." These are the revelation, or coming of Jesus Christ: his being accompanied with his *mighty angels*; the heavens and the earth *passing away*, &c. By a reference to the 24th chapter of Matthew, you will find all these circumstances particularly introduced, and likewise the time specified by the Savior himself, when they should take place.—"Verily, verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass away till all these things shall be fulfilled." So far as these circumstances are concerned, they certainly afford not the shadow of evidence of a future general judgment. But you speak of this judgment which you represent as intimately associated with the resurrection of the dead, so intimately indeed, "that it is represented as occurring on the same day." To prove this you quote and compare two passages of Scripture. "The word that I have spoken," says our Lord, "the same shall judge him in the last day." To determine when this last day is, you introduce Martha the sister of Lazarus, who said, with respect to her brother and in answer to the de-

claration of Jesus that he should rise again, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." The conclusion is not irresistible, however, unless you are disposed to take the words of an uninspired woman as infallible. Martha, it is probable, spoke in accordance with the notions and phraseology of the Jews, but it must not be taken for granted that she spoke the truth of revelation.

"These plain Scriptural arguments," you tell us with characteristic modesty and truth, "prove beyond the power of successful controversy, that there will be a future and general judgment, when 'God will render to every man according to the deeds done in the body.'" And you conclude by saying that Universalists, to be consistent, should deny the resurrection of the dead, as well as the general judgment; for the arguments by which the former is supported, are no more conclusive than those by which the latter is sustained." But let this vaporing pass. Our readers can now judge whether your "plain Scriptural arguments" possess the power which you ascribe to them.

The popular doctrine of a future general judgment may be true; but I am frank to confess that your arguments have not convinced me, nor do I think that the proof is so direct and unequivocal as you seem to imagine. That God judges and rewards and punishes men here in some cases and to some extent, nay, that every individual eats some of the fruits of his doings in this world, is a truth so plainly revealed that no man who had not a system to support could even deny or doubt it. But that there is to be a future general judgment, and that under that judgment "God will render to every man according to his deeds done in the body," is a doctrine not so well authenticated, and which is attended with very great difficulties.—These you have neither avoided nor lessened by the course which you have pursued. Until you can determine for yourself whether this world is a state of rewards and punishments or not, I must think your prospect but a dreary one for discovering the truth with respect to the future. If a man cannot or will not see the sun in the heavens, he may wisely forego all disputation about the existence of those fixed stars of

which some have dreamed, whose light has not yet reached our earth. And rely upon it, the doctrine of future punishment can never be proved, only as you acknowledge at least partial rewards and punishments here in the present state.— Around this point you have been shuffling thus far in your lectures. When it suited your purpose you tacitly admitted this, and then, when it seemed necessary in order to raise another argument, you denied it altogether, and spoke as if man had as little to hope from righteousness, or to fear from sin in this present life, as though there were neither laws nor a God in the universe.

I did not commence this review of your arguments in favor of the doctrine of future punishment because I wished to deny that doctrine, nor because it was necessary to deny it, in order to sustain Universalism. I was rather anxious to show you that, whether the doctrine itself is true or false, you have not proved it, and perhaps you might safely infer that you cannot prove it. You have advanced many arguments, but as they were borrowed from different authors, and brought together with a singular economy of labor and discrimination, they have generally proved destructive of each other.

I have now considered the first and second propositions of your second lecture, and unless I greatly err in my estimate of your reasoning, your success in showing that the penalty of the law was not inflicted as it was threatened, and that it will be inflicted in a future state of being, has not been such as to carry conviction to any unprejudiced mind. In my next I shall enter upon the proper field of controversy, in an examination of your argument in favor of the eternity of punishment. In the mean time I am as ever,

Yours, &c.

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XIII.

Dear Sir---Having seen what ill success attended your efforts to prove that the threatened penalty was suspended, and that it will be inflicted in a future world, we now come to the examination of your arguments designed to show that its execution upon "the finally impenitent will result in their endless misery."

This is a very important point, indeed it is the main point of the controversy between Universalists and Limitarians.— And it would have saved some time and unnecessary labor had it occurred to you to have established this proposition in the outset; for every proof of endless misery is at the same time, directly or indirectly, equal proof that the divine penalty was suspended, and that there will be punishment in a future state.

Of your success in this part of your labors you entertain a very gratifying and comfortable assurance. "For the truth of this doctrine of the endless punishment of the wicked," you say, "we have *thus saith the Lord*. For the implicit* language of the Scriptures teaches it." This is precisely as it should be. If the doctrine of endless misery can be proved at all, it must be proved by a *thus saith the Lord*. Nothing short of the explicit language of Scripture is deserving of much attention here.

You present us with ten arguments in favor of the doctrine of endless misery. These I must examine with some degree of care.

1. The first is predicated on the meaning of certain words, expressive of the duration of time. You say "there can be no terms coined by which to express *endless duration* stronger than those which the Bible employs to designate the duration of the punishment of the wicked." This declaration, it appears to me, is too confidently made. But what are these words? "They are," you say, "such as *everlasting*, *for-*

* Perhaps you mean *explicit*.

ever, for ever and ever, eternal, dieth not, unquenchable."— And as illustrations you quote Matt. xxv. 46, xviii. 8. 2 Thess. i. 9, Jude 7.

The manner in which the preceding declaration is sustained is curious, and worthy of attention. In the first place, we are edified with Drs. Johnson and Webster's definitions of the English words *everlasting* and *eternal*; and with Mr. Groves' definition of the Greek word *aionios*—all borrowed without credit from Mr. Lee. Then comes an observation relating to that word from Dr. Chauncey, and another from Dr. Huntington, borrowed without credit from Mr. Merritt.* And this is followed by two or three pages from Dr. A. Clarke, "one of the most learned Biblical critics of the age," all second-hand from Mr. Lee.

But what is the amount of this array of authorities? The point to be proved is that *aion* and *aionos* when applied to punishment mean literally endless. Now what say your authorities? Mr. Groves, as quoted by Mr. Lee, defines *aionios* thus, "*Eternal, immortal, perpetual, forever, past, ancient.*" Dr. Chauncey, according to Mr. Merritt, says, "This word *aionios* is applied to the future state of the righteous more than forty times in the New Testament; hence you infer that it is also applied in the same sense to the future state of the wicked. Dr. Huntington affirms that the Bible plainly says that sinners shall be damned to interminable punishment, "as plainly as language can express, or any man or even God himself can speak." But Dr. Clarke is not only very positive that the Hebrew *olam* and the Greek *aion*, and *aionios*, denote eternity or what is strictly endless, but he also asserts that this is the strict and proper meaning of the words, and that all other meanings are accommodated ones. "Those," says he, "who bring any of these terms in an accommodated sense to favor a particular doctrine, must depend upon the good graces of their opponents for permission to use them in this way."

* Instead of Huntington, you, after the example of Mr. Merritt, write Huntington—a slight error, indicating perhaps that neither of you had ever examined his work, or even read the title page.

It is conceded, then, that these words have another, an accommodated sense, in which they do not signify endless duration. Of course they are ambiguous, and it is not infallibly certain that when applied to punishment they express the idea of eternity. But Dr. Clarke understood as well as any other great Biblical critic, the advantage to be gained in absolving himself from the necessity of proving that *aionian*, or everlasting punishment, means endless punishment; and at the same time of imposing upon the Universalist the burden of proving that such language does *not* convey such a meaning. The easiest way of doing this was to make out, as best he could, that the Hebrew *olam* and the Greek *aion* and *aionios* do radically or primarily denote absolute eternity. Let us inquire into the claims which the Doctor has here set up.

The Hebrew *olam* is derived, as he and others say, from a verb that signifies to *conceal* or *hide*; and in accordance with this derivation, Parkhurst properly defines the word as meaning "time hidden or concealed from man," i. e. time indefinite. In this Dr. Clarke agrees with Mr. Parkhurst. May I ask then, if time indefinite, or time whose duration is hidden from man necessarily implies eternity? It cannot be pretended; and of course "the real grammatical meaning" of the word is not *endless duration*. And so says Dr. Taylor. "It signifieth eternity," says he, "not from the proper force of the word, but when the sense, of the place or the nature of the subject to which it is applied requireth it; as God and his attributes." See Balfour's Reply to Stuart, p. 65.

It is obvious that no light can be thrown upon the primitive meaning of the word by the frequency or unfrequency with which it occurs in a limited or unlimited sense. It might, for instance, radically denote absolute eternity, and yet not occur in this primitive sense ten times in the whole Bible; or it might signify, as it does, time indefinite, and still be employed in an infinite sense in a great majority of cases. But nothing is to be gained by inquiries in this direction. The first question is, Does it primarily signify endless duration? And the second, Is it employed in its primary or secondary sense when applied to punishment? Now the only advantage to be

derived from solving the first question is to decide whether the Limitarian or the Universalist is under the greatest obligation to attempt the proof upon the second. If it can be made out that the word does primarily denote absolute eternity, then in the discussion, the Limitarian is permitted to assume this signification in every case where the word occurs, and it devolves upon the Universalist to prove that in a given instance it cannot bear this signification, or that it is not necessary, i. e. it can bear another.

Now it appears from Dr. Clarke's own derivation of the word *olam*, and from the testimony of Dr. Taylor, that it signifies merely *concealed* or *hidden duration*, i. e. time indefinite, and not *eternity*; and of course it is the business of the advocate of endless misery to prove that this word when applied to punishment, does actually mean "endless duration."

These observations apply with equal force to the Greek *aion* and *aionios*. These words are almost uniformly employed by the Seventy in translating the Hebrew *olam*, and as Prof. Stuart says, "the coincidence between *aion* and *olam* is very striking; so much so, that nothing can be more evident, than that the one corresponds with the other in most cases throughout, and each reflects light upon the other."

Aristotle's derivation of *aion*—*aei* and *on*, *ever* or *always being*—is probably correct, but *aei*, on which Dr. Clarke attempts to predicate the idea of eternity is altogether too weak for that purpose. Respecting the classical use of this word, says Professor Stuart, "there can be little or no doubt. *Aion* means, 1. *Length* or *space of time*; and so *time of life*, *age of man*, *age* considered as a space of time. 2. *Long time*, *eternity*, *long indefinite space of time*." In the New Testament, however, it corresponds more nearly to the Hebrew *olam* than to classical usage; and here the Professor assigns the word the following as its first general class of meanings: "*An indefinite period of time; time without limitation; ever, forever, time without end, eternity*." These definitions are sustained by Dr. Robinson, in his excellent Greek & English Lexicon of the New Testament; "*Aevum*, *age*, i. e. an indefinite long period or lapse of time, *perpetuity*, *ever*,

forever, eternity." If these definitions are correct, the authorities which you quoted to prove that these words primarily denote absolute eternity cannot be relied on. *Indefinite*, and not *endless* duration, is the "real grammatical meaning" of *aion* and *aionois* as well as of *olam*; and hence, according to the observations before made, the duty devolves upon the advocates of endless misery to prove that these words, when applied to punishment, must be interpreted in the highest sense they ever bear.

And here let me remark, that the real point in debate seems to be often overlooked. Were an unprejudiced man, altogether unacquainted with the discussion, to read many a sermon and tract, and even some works of higher pretensions, opposed to Universalism, he would be led to suppose that the question at issue was, whether the words translated, *eternal* and *everlasting*, were ever applied by inspired writers to punishment. And he would be filled with astonishment that any man with eyes or ears could controvert so plain a fact.—But if he were to examine the subject still farther, he would feel an almost equal astonishment that so many efforts should be made to prove what no one ever disputed, viz: that the Scriptures speak of *aionian* or everlasting punishment—and so few to establish what the Universalist actually denies, viz: that this punishment is literally *endless*. Assertions, and those of a startling character, he would find prevalent enough on this point. He would be told that "we must either admit the endless misery of hell, or give up the endless happiness of heaven," nay, that "either the declarations of the Scriptures do not establish the fact, that God, and his glory, and praise, and happiness are *endless*; nor that the happiness of the righteous in a future world is *endless*; or else they establish the fact, that the punishment of the wicked is *endless*."—And this by a scholar! This by Professor Stuart!!

I cannot here forbear quoting a paragraph from Dr. SAMUEL PARR, a Greek scholar, who closed his life but a few years since, and while living had few equals and no superior in a deep and most familiar knowledge of that language; and who should have worn a mitre, if talents and learning and mo-

ral worth are regarded in the Church of England as qualifications for such an office, or as fitted to reflect honor upon it. Dr. Farr says—

“In the minds of many contemplative and serious men, doubts have sometimes arisen upon the eternity of punishment, and much criticism has been employed upon the signification of the term in which that opinion is thought by some, and denied by others, to have been conveyed. But upon a state of immortal happiness all parties are agreed; all admit that such a state has been announced to us in the gospel. All have allowed the precise and definite signification of the words incorruptible and immortal.” Works, Lond. 8vo. ed. vol. vi. pp. 38, 39.

How Prof. Stuart, with his acknowledged learning, and usual candor, could suffer his attachment to a favorite dogma to betray him into such groundless assertions as those quoted above, is to me a mystery. For it is impossible that he should not know that were *olam*, and *aion* and *aionios*, all struck from the holy Bible, the eternity of God's existence and glory, and of the happiness of heaven and its inhabitants, multiplied as they are to be by the trophies of a universal resurrection through Him who was made a Priest “after the power of an endless life,” would all still be susceptible of the clearest and most unquestionable proof. To these subjects there is a class of words applied which are never found in connexion with punishment, and which are far stronger than either of the words under consideration. And what is very singular is, that the Professor seems to have seen and acknowledged not so much as this indeed, but enough to contradict the assertions before referred to. On 1 Tim. i. 17, “The King eternal, *aionon*, immortal, *aphtharto*,” &c. he says “The objection to construing *aionon* here as meaning *ages*, is, that the idea of *eternity*, or *immortality*, (which would thus be designated by it,) is expressed by the very next word which follows, viz. *aphtharto*, *incorruptible*, *imperishable*, *immortal*.” In accordance with this opinion, he construes *aionon* as meaning the *world* or the *universe*; a sense which I think it difficult to show the word ever bears. He first takes it for granted that *aionon*, if ren-

dered *ages*, would designate the idea of *eternity*; and because this idea is most fully and unequivocally expressed by *aphtharto*, he finds himself forced to adopt a very unusual, if not a false sense, in order to construe the passage intelligibly. But may not *aionon* be rendered *ages* in the frequent sense of *dispensations*, without implying eternity? So at least the apostle seems to have thought, and he therefore added *aphtharto* to convey a much higher idea, and by a word which is unambiguous, and admits of no doubt.

The conclusion to which we are brought, then, is, that the Hebrew *olam* and the Greek *aion* and *aionios* primarily signify, not eternity, but an indefinite time; that they are used sometimes in an infinite sense, and sometimes in a limited sense; and that the extent of their meaning depends in a great measure upon the nature of the subject to which they are applied. The advocate of endless misery, therefore, is not at liberty to assume that these words ever imply, and much less that they clearly express the idea of endless duration when applied to punishment. It is incumbent on him to assign a valid reason why they should be construed with the same extent of meaning when applied to the punishment of a man, as when applied to the existence of God. This has never yet been done; and I despair of seeing the task assumed by any one qualified to do the subject even tolerable justice.

There is one remark more that belongs to this subject. It is, that Origen, an ancient Greek father, and altogether the most learned christian of his age, himself an avowed and acknowledged Universalist, freely uses, in all his works, and without any explanation, the expressions *everlasting fire*, *everlasting punishment*, &c., thus most conclusively showing that he did by no means attach such a signification to the terms which we are now considering, as has been put upon them in more recent times. And the same remark applies to several other ancient writers. See the *Ancient History of Universalism*, by H. Ballou 2d, pp. 97, and 114.

Before closing this letter, I must, even at the risk of being thought too prolix, take notice of a single passage of Scripture which you bring forward and comment upon, for the pur-

pose of establishing your views of the word *aiōnios*. This is Jude 7, in which, speaking of Sodom and Gomorrah, the inspired writer says, they "are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Your remarks are borrowed, though with due credit, from Mr. Merritt, who had before borrowed them substantially from Mr. Scott. Mr. Merritt on this passage, says, "1. That it does not speak of the punishment of those ancient sinners as being past, but as still continuing, they are '*suffering*;' and he assigns a reason for it, viz. 2. They are set forth for an *example*. 3. This example could not be in the literal destruction of those cities, for we know not that they have ever been an example in this sense. It must, therefore, be in their '*suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*.' 4. He that denies this makes that no example which God '*hath set forth for an example unto all that should after live ungodly*.' "

The logic of this argument I must confess myself unable to trace. In the first place it seems to be taken for granted that the words "*are set forth—suffering*" must be rigidly construed in the present tense, as expressive of what is at the moment actually being suffered. Now any person who is disposed to be candid, must acknowledge that this phraseology is as proper on the supposition that Jude spoke of the temporal destruction of the cities he mentions, as if he had intended to affirm that they were still suffering. The use of the present for the past in this manner is of very common occurrence, nor is it easy to see how Jude could have expressed the fact in more appropriate language. But Mr. Merritt assigns a reason why it must be construed to signify present suffering. It is that these cities "*are set forth for an example*." The past then, affords us no example. Whatever is not living, and doing, and suffering before us cannot exert any influence upon us. This is the inference from Mr. Merritt's reasoning; but is it according to well known fact? Is the public execution of a murderer an example no longer than he is undergoing the agonies of death? And could not a judge say to a criminal who was treading the way to the gallows, Remember the case of A. B. &c. who are set forth as examples suffering the

penalty of the law? Ah! but says Mr. Merritt, the judge did "not speak of the punishment of those sinners as being past, but as still continuing; they are *suffering*." I leave you to settle this with the commonest use of language.

Again, Mr. Merritt says, "This example could not be in the literal destruction of these cities, for we do not know that they have ever been an example in this sense." Shade of Aristotle! And so a thing *cannot be* because Mr. Merritt does not *know it*. But does he know the contrary? St. Peter says that God "turning the cities of Sodom and Gommorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, *making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.*" 2 Pet. ii. 6. The apostle seems to have known that these cities had been an example in the sense of a "literal destruction;" and had Mr. Merritt been half as anxious to attain the truth, as he was to prove the darling doctrine of endless misery, he might at least have believed, what St. Peter plainly affirms.

Once more; because Mr. Merritt does not choose to know that the example spoken of, consisted in the literal destruction of those cities, he concludes with the same kind of logic, that "it must, therefore, have been in their suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." And, as if to settle the point beyond further debate, he tells us that "he who denies this makes that no example which 'God hath set forth for an example unto all that should after live ungodly.'" That is, he who denies Mr. Scott's, and Mr. Merritt's, and Mr. Remington's reasoning on this point, denies the word of God! at least, denies this passage of Methodist Scripture—"hath set forth for an example unto all that should after live ungodly;"—with which the argument is closed and the sentence rounded off.

But if it would not be inconsistent to answer one who ventures to doubt your infallibility, may I ask how you know that the example of which Jude speaks, is an example of endless misery? The sacred writers make frequent allusion to "the literal destruction" of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example of overthrow and temporal punishment. See Deut. xxix. 23, Isa. xiii. 19, Jer. xlix. 18 and l. 40, Lam. iv. 6, Amos iv. 11,

and 2 Pet. ii. 4, &c. Of this, however, you and your brethren seem to be willingly ignorant. But I challenge you to refer to a single passage in the Bible, where any allusion is made to the future punishment of these cities or their inhabitants.— Besides, the sufferings of a future state, how frequently soever they might be mentioned in the Scriptures, could never be spoken of as being *set forth for an example*: for this language of Jude clearly expresses the idea, as Benson and Gilpin have well observed, of something set forth to the public view of all, as a visible example of God's displeasure against sin. The original words demand such a construction. But the torments of another world have never been presented to the view of mortals in this manner.

It is unnecessary to pursue this subject farther, though I must be permitted to remark that your views on the passage before us, receive very little countenance with the best commentators. Dr. Hammond, it is true, adopts this interpretation here, but he gives another on 2 Thess. i. 9, where he introduces this text. Matthew Henry does not doubt that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah "are now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," though he says "the apostle here calls to our remembrance the destruction" of those cities. Dr. A. Clarke shows his disposition to favor you, but acknowledges that, applied to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the word *aionios* has its grammatical and proper meaning. Drs. Macknight, Doddridge, and Bloomfield, as well as Bengel, are willing to think this destruction "a lively emblem," "a faint type," "an example" of future punishment in eternal fire. While Le Clerk, Bp. Jer. Taylor, Drs. Whitby, Dodwell, Benson, Gilpin and others interpret it of this destruction without any reference to a future state. I will only add the testimony of Dr. Clarke and Dr. Whitby on the meaning of the word *aionios* here used. Dr. Clarke says, that whether applied to future misery or to the temporal destruction of the cities spoken of "the word *per aionion* signifies an *eternally destructive fire*; . . . it has no end in the destruction of the cities; they were totally burnt up, and never were and never can be rebuilt." Dr. Whitby says, "I conceive they

are said to *suffer the vengeance of eternal fire*, not because their souls are at present punished in hell fire, but because they and their cities perished by that fire from heaven which brought perpetual and irreparable destruction on them." And he adds, "Nor is there any thing more common and familiar in Scripture than to represent a thorough and irreparable *vestation*, whose effects and signs should be still remaining, by the word *aionios* which we here render eternal." Whitby's note on this passage is full, and his reasons for not adopting such a view as yours seem to me decisive. But enough.

We have now seen how futile is your attempt to ground the doctrine of endless misery on *alam*, *aion* and *aionios*, and have tried your "positive proof" and found it fallacious.

As ever, yours, &c.

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XIV.

Dear Sir—Your second argument in favor of endless misery seems to me rather curious than convincing. Treading once more in the footsteps of the Rev. Mr. Lee, you say—"If the punishment of the wicked were not endless and their state consequently hopeless, then prayer would prevail in the other world as well as the present. Here we are commanded to pray for all men; but no where in the Bible are we directed to pray for the dead." Hence you conclude that the condition of sinners becomes fixed the moment they pass into another world, and therefore prayer would be unavailing in their behalf. "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

This I suppose is one of your "positive proofs" of endless misery! In the first place, you assume that we are not to pray for the dead, and that without troubling yourself whether the dead need our prayers or not. You then proceed with your usual logic to infer that if we in this world are not required to pray for those in the other, their state must be hopeless and their endless misery certain! This it must be con-

fessed is a very summary method, and well worthy the Pastor of the Willet street Church. But suppose it were granted that we are not to pray for the dead; is it necessary to conclude that their condition is fixed for eternity? and the state of the wicked hopeless? The conclusion does not appear to me irresistible. There are very valid reasons why such prayers are not required. The dead may no longer need the prayers of mere mortals, and if they did, we know so little of their circumstances and wants, that we are by no means very highly qualified for such service. But while we are unfit to pray for the dead, we need not be justified in inferring that they are rejected of God. The "Lord of all," both of the dead and the living, will not forget those for whom he died. In the words of a learned Episcopal divine of this city, I can say, "The benefits of Christ's prevailing intercession with the Father, is perpetually operative in behalf of all mankind." One remark more; you think if the state of the wicked beyond death were not hopeless, our prayers would prevail for them in the other world as well as here. It might seem that if the prayers of the saints were prevailing, the wicked would hardly need them after the close of this life, for you tell us that "here we are commanded to pray for all men." But if, as you think, a large portion of the human race will perish everlastingly, notwithstanding all the prayers of the godly, the dead have no great reason to regret that their prevailing prayers are no longer required. I leave this argument, however, for the consideration of the reader. It is altogether too indirect and too far-fetched to deserve a moment's consideration on such a subject as the interminable wretchedness of countless millions of our race; and I should be wanting in my duty did I not tell you frankly that it is an insult to common sense to appeal to what God has not said, or not required, to prove such a doctrine.

Your third argument in favor of the amiable doctrine of endless torments is founded on "the contrast which the scriptures draw between the punishment of the wicked and the happiness of the righteous." There is, you tell us, an endless difference between the one and the other. "The righteous go into eternal

life, and the wicked into torment eternal." Matt. xxv. 46. "Now," say you, "the wicked must either go into life eternal or they are for ever lost. To say they will, is to contradict the express declarations of the scriptures. We have just as much reason and as good authority to say the righteous shall go into '*torment eternal*,' as that the wicked shall go into '*life eternal*;' for there is an eternal difference between the happiness of the one and the torment of the other."

The argument founded on antithetical terms is good if cautiously applied. If you can show what eternal life means in one part of the text here referred to, no doubt can be entertained that eternal punishment, or as you are pleased to call it, eternal torment, means something that is in some respect its direct opposite. The fallacy³ in which you indulge yourself begins by assuming that eternal life means endless felicity in heaven, and of course concludes that eternal torment means nothing less than endless misery in hell. I deny your premise. I deny that eternal life in Matt. xxv. 46, means endless felicity in heaven, and call upon you for proof.

You cannot be ignorant that these words are often employed in the New Testament to express the life and peace which the christian enjoys in the gospel here in this world. And it is susceptible of the clearest proof that the whole twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew was spoken by our Lord in exclusive reference to events which have long since transpired. These predictions were to be accomplished when the Son of man came in his glory with the holy angels; and does any careful reader of the scriptures need to be informed that this event was most unequivocally foretold by Christ himself as to take place during that very generation in which he lived? It was then that the Son of man was to "sit upon the throne of his glory," and welcome the believers to the joys of his gospel kingdom, and punish the unbelieving with exclusion and temporal overthrow. Read the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew in connexion, and understand them, and you will never appeal to a text in either of them again to prove endless misery.

The same remarks apply to John iii. 15: "God so loved

the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life." This passage offers another instance of antithesis. Here, too, you assume, that everlasting life imports endless felicity in heaven, and hence conclude that to perish signifies the suffering of endless misery. But is it quite safe to take premises for granted when followed by such horrible conclusions? A little examination would probably convince you that the phrase everlasting life here means much less than you assume. But should it even be conceded that it denotes endless felicity, the word perish will not necessarily imply endless torment, since it may be taken in other senses and yet the antithesis be preserved.

I am very willing to believe that you "could multiply passages of scripture almost indefinitely, on this subject," and of this character; but if the Bible contains no better proof of endless misery than they would afford, I should advise you to relinquish your profession at once; for it is too harsh a reflection on the Deity to believe that we are exposed to such a punishment, and at the same time he has nowhere revealed it in clear and intelligible terms.

I now pass to your fourth *thus saith the Lord*, in support of your favorite dogma. "The doctrine of the endless misery of the wicked," you tell us, "may also be inferred from the space given to man, wherein to repent and prepare for eternity, and the warnings and cautions of the Scripture lest they should come short of salvation, and lose their souls." Of these "warnings and cautions" you edify us with a small specimen, such as, "Repent, or ye shall all likewise perish." Luke xiii. 3, 5. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Philip. ii. 12. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Eccl. ix. 10. "The night cometh when no man can work." John ix. 4, and "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near." Isa. lv. 6.

On Luke xiii. 3, you might have profitably consulted Dr. Adam Clarke, who tells us that this prediction was literally

fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem. "When the city was taken by the Romans, multitudes of the priests, &c. who were going on with the sacrifices were slain, and their blood mingled with the blood of their victims; and multitudes were buried under the ruins of the walls, houses and temple." It is really marvellous that any man will quote this text in opposition to every principle of sound exegesis, and the almost united voice of learned commentators, in support of endless misery.—What there is in Philip. ii. 12, that favors your argument of inferences, I know not. The apostle says nothing inconsistent with Universalism, but on the contrary, founds his exhortation to work out our salvation upon the fact, that the time is coming when, "in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father;" a fact which it is probable you do not believe, but which is a proof of the final holiness and happiness of all mankind, which bids defiance to all the arts of sophistry and all the strength of criticism.—The passage which you quote from Ecclesiastes is a very favorite one with your sect. Indeed, it is one of the strongest passages in the Bible on which you venture to predicate that favorite doctrine of no change after death. But even this is but a precarious ground of hope. For in the first place, it cannot be proved that the inspired author made any reference to the future world or the work of salvation; and in the second, if he did, the passage before us furnishes just as much evidence of annihilation, as of no change after death. If there is no work in the grave, so neither is there any device, or knowledge or wisdom there.—Still more unfortunate were you in quoting John ix. 4, which contains the words of our Savior applied to himself: "I must work the work of him that sent me; the night cometh when no man can work." You quote only the latter part of the passage, and leave your readers to infer—whatever they please. And this is proving endless misery! The quotation from Isaiah is equally conclusive. You infer from it that men are in danger of "eternal torment," which seems to be the only reason you can assign why they should

seek the Lord. Dr. Adam Clarke tells us that "Rab. David Kimchi gives the true sense of this passage: Seek ye the Lord *because* he may be found; call upon him *because* he is near." This affords a somewhat different meaning from that of the common version, and at once leaves the end for which you quoted it unattained. For your comfort, however, I must say that Dr. Clarke adds the good Rabbi's gloss, containing a sentiment which the prophet neither expressed nor intimated, but which is precisely to your purpose: "Repent before ye die, for *after death there is no conversion of the soul.*"

But these scriptural "warnings and cautions" imply endless misery! Why should a sinner be exhorted to repent and work righteousness if there be no danger of eternal torment? That is a question that my good Methodist friends cannot solve, and upon it are predicated many of their objections to Universalism. Think you Paul would ever have ceased to persecute the Church, if Christ had not revealed to him his exposedness to endless burnings? True: but where is the proof of such a revelation? Oh, there is a *thus saith the Lord*, that is, it may be *inferred* from what has *not* been revealed at all! Such, Br. Remington, is your "positive proof."

Endless punishment may be inferred from the space which God has given to man to repent and prepare for eternity. Quoting from "a late author," you say, "There is space given to every sinner in which to seek God, repent, and work out his own salvation. To this work he should apply himself vigorously." To subserve your purpose, the space of time given the sinner for repentance must be of such a length, and attended by such favorable circumstances, as would lead us to believe, or at least fully justify us in believing, that its termination will be followed by no farther opportunities of reformation, but that the future condition of such as do not most wisely employ it in working out their salvation, will be nothing else than endless and unmitigated misery. Now who has the hardihood to assert that such is the fact? We see individuals cut suddenly off, at all ages and under every diversity of circumstance; in christian and heathen lands; educated and

uneducated; some having abused great opportunities, and others having most judiciously and yet ineffectually improved the poorest. We see a comparatively good man suddenly perishing under the hand of the assassin, dying with one sin unrepented of; and we see that assassin enjoying ample space and opportunity for repentance; and can we persuade ourselves that an eternity of woe awaits the good man and an eternity of bliss the murderer? Can we persuade ourselves that such a space of time was granted to the former as would justify God in consigning him to endless torments? But how is it in heathen lands, where the light of the gospel has never shined, and the name of God has never been heard? Has space been given them to seek God, and repent and work out their salvation? Br. Remington, here are some dark places in your theology, which it would be alike to the credit of your head and your heart to clear up. You believe that since the fall the condition of man "is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith and calling upon God." You know that the heathen have not heard the gospel and are totally ignorant of the way of salvation, and indeed of salvation itself; and yet as if you loved to indulge in contradictions and absurdities, you tell us "there is space given to every sinner in which to seek God, and repent, and work out his own salvation!!"

"The scriptures," you say in the fifth place, "deny salvation to certain classes of sinners, which denial evidently implies their endless punishment." Ah, do the scriptures deny salvation to certain classes of sinners? This is quite a new doctrine among Methodists, and especially for those who contend that "there is space given to every man to seek God, repent, and work out his salvation." Then it is not true that Christ died for all, or that God will have all men to be saved!

But I will examine what I suppose you mean, and not what you say. You mean, I presume, that certain classes of sinners are not saved while they remain sinners, that is, while they retain their present characters. No man can be a christian whose righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. No man can see the kingdom of God

except he be born again. No murderer nor whoremonger nor unclean person, has any inheritance, or shall have any, so long as he sustains such a character, in the kingdom of heaven. See Matt. v. 5, John iii. 3, Gal. v. 21, Eph. v. 5. All this Universalists believe quite as fully as you or Mr. Lee, from whom, without credit, you borrowed this fearful argument. They know that "no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him;" they know that no sinner, no man still in love with evil-doing, is in possession of the kingdom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; but they do not know, nor do you, that "the scriptures deny salvation to certain classes of sinners." If the scriptures do not speak falsely, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and sinners, too, of every class; and again, if they do not deceive me, he must reign till he has made an end of sin and brought in everlasting righteousness—till he "hath put all things under his feet," when God shall be all in all. For myself, I cannot entertain the idea that Christ came and suffered in vain; and particularly so, when the Scriptures are express in asserting that "he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." If you can believe that millions of those for whom Christ died are still denied salvation—if you can believe that the Friend of sinners can be satisfied with such a result of his labors and love, you are entirely welcome to your faith and all its comforts. But for myself, let me believe God and his word, and rejoice in hope of his glory.

Yours, as ever,

• THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XV.

Dear Sir—Your sixth proof of endless misery, borrowed as usual without credit, from Mr. Lee, is drawn from “what the Scriptures say of the *portion, end and last state* of the wicked,” which you think “necessarily leads to the conclusion that their punishment will be endless.” In illustration of your views on this subject, you refer to several passages of Scripture, in which the words italicised above occur. The argument is not very formidable, but yet I must not pass it without some examination.

In the first place you call our attention to what is said of the *portion* of the wicked. Our Savior speaks of certain individuals to whom he would appoint a portion among hypocrites and unbelievers. Matt. xxiv. 51 and Luke xii. 46. What this portion is, you show from Rev. xxi. 8. “But the fearful and unbelieving, &c. shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.” All this is marvellously plain no doubt to you. But will you allow me to ask you what is meant by the *second death*, i. e. what did the inspired writer mean? Where, and what is the lake of fire and brimstone? and when are these characters to take their portion in it? A critically scriptural answer to these questions is desirable and might lead you to other conclusions than those you have now adopted. Again, who were those whose portion was to be appointed them with hypocrites and unbelievers; and when was this allotment to be made? Our Savior was speaking to his apostles and disciples, and forewarning them of the dangers arising from unfaithfulness and apostacy. He was about to leave them, and his second coming “in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”—an event which was to take place during that very generation—was to be followed by a judgment. Then the Scribes and Pharisees, so often called “hypocrites,” and the Jews generally, the “unbelievers” of that age, were to be punished with

a terrible overthrow. And with them, those who had professed christianity, but had proved themselves "evil servants;" who had said, "My Lord delayeth his coming, and began to smite their fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunken," were also to partake in the same calamities, and suffer the same punishment. But were these punishments reserved for the future world? Were they not, on the contrary inflicted as our Savior most clearly foretold, before that generation in which he lived, had passed away? And yet, such passages as these are quoted, and dwelt upon to prove endless misery! Perhaps they are the best proofs the Scriptures afford of that God-dishonoring dogma.

So also of the *end* of the wicked. David says, Ps. lxxiii., that he was envious at the prosperity of the wicked, but when he entered the sanctuary he learned their end. "Surely, thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down to destruction; they are utterly consumed with terrors. Now it requires no miraculous insight to perceive, and one should think, no uncommon frankness to acknowledge, that the Psalmist was here speaking exclusively of what is exhibited in this world. That he made any allusion to the final condition of men in the eternal world, cannot be proved, and you know, or ought to know, that it is undeserving the faith of any christian. Yet you assume that the Psalmist looked forward to eternity and spoke of the sinner's end there. In the same spirit of presumptuous ignorance you quote Jer. xvii. 11, 2 Cor. xi. 13, 15, Phil. iii. 18, and Heb. vi. 8. In these several passages the word *end* occurs, and you assume that it means the fixed state of the wicked, but you do not expose your weakness by attempting any kind of proof. This I suppose is your *thus saith the Lord*, of which you boasted in the outset, and which was to decide the controversy, and establish the doctrine of endless torments.

Once more, "In Luke xi. 24—26," you tell us, "we have an account of a man, who after the unclean spirit had gone out of him, was re-possessed by seven other spirits more wicked than the first; and we are told that the *last* state of that man was worse than the first! Will the Universalists tell

us which is the *last state* of a man? It is not death, for they admit that he will have a resurrection from the dead, and that this will be the final or last state of man. At the resurrection, therefore, his state will be worse than the first! Can this be so, if all men are then made holy and happy? Certainly not; for then his *last state* would be much better than the *first*. Therefore he can never be holy and happy but must be eternally miserable."

I have copied the whole argument for the purpose of showing its full proportions. The logic, it must be confessed, is rather lame, but then it is employed in a bad cause. Let us examine it a moment. In the first place, what you call "an account of a man," is only a parable, and that founded not on any probable or possible circumstances, but as Dr. Lightfoot says, "was spoken according to the capacity of the common people, or rather according to the deceit put upon them by the Jewish exorcists." In the second place, these words, *last state—worse than the first*—which you make so much of, are according to Dr. Bloomfield, "a proverbial expression." And in the third place, the *last state* here mentioned, was spoken of not absolutely, but relatively, i. e. the condition of the supposed individual was worse after the unclean spirit returned "with seven other spirits worse than himself" than it was when that single spirit alone possessed him. Nothing was said of the man's final condition in eternity. No allusion was made to such a state, and you therefore abuse the passage. The meaning is too obvious to be overlooked save by one who is engaged in rearing mountains out of mole-hills. The parable was designed to show how the wickedness of the Jews, as a people, had increased and was increasing. Under the preaching of John they showed signs of repentance, and "many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism," and the nation seemed "willing for a season to walk in his light." But these promises of reformation were not realized: they soon relapsed into their former state, and became more incredulous and obstinate and wicked than before, till at last, as if urged on by a legion of evil spirits, they crucified the Lord of light and glory. Yet a little sleight of hand can transmute such a

parable into a matter of fact, and make it support the very worst doctrine in the universe of God!

In the seventh place, you tell us that "the future endless punishment of the wicked, may be inferred from the fact that those who reject the gospel, are counted worthy of sorer punishment than can be inflicted upon mortals in this world." Of this, Heb. x. 28, 29, furnishes the proof: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?"

To make out your point, you quote a passage from my sermon on the Penalty of Sin, in which I say, "a premature, violent and ignominious death inflicted for crime, has always been regarded both by God and man as the greatest punishment mortals can suffer." You then proceed with great acuteness to show forth the power of the argument. "For despising Moses' law, the individual was punished with a premature, violent and ignominious death," but "for despising the gospel of Christ the individual subjects himself to *sorer* punishment. We ask the Universalists, what punishment is this?"—and you conclude by saying that "it must be extended to the world to come, and be the wages of sin which is death, not the death of the body, for it is a sorer punishment than the death of the body; and therefore can be nothing short of the *second death*, which is judgment without mercy, or the execution of the Divine penalty upon such as obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But did it not occur to you in the exercise of all this logical acumen, that even a premature, violent and ignominious death may be inflicted in various ways, and attended with different circumstances of horror and pain? No, one, I suppose, would imagine that being hung, or shot, is so fearful a death as being broken on the wheel, or impaled, or crucified. In this respect one kind of death might be a much sorer punishment than another. A professed divine should have been induced to inquire what crime the apostle alluded to, and what kind of punishment he spoke of as existing under the law of Moses. Such an inquiry would satisfy any one that it was of apostacy

that St. Paul was here speaking, the punishments of which under the Law was death by stoning. See Deut. xvii. 2—7. With this crime, and its specific punishment, the apostle contrasted that of treading under foot the Son of God, i. e. of apostacy from the religion of Jesus Christ, and the sorer punishment which such a crime would merit. Nor does he leave us in doubt respecting the time when this sorer punishment was to be inflicted. At verse 25 he affirms that his Hebrew brethren, to whom he wrote, then saw the day approaching. What day that was the commentators will inform you; even Dr. Clarke says it was "the time when God would come and pour out his judgments on the Jewish nation." See also Dr. Macknight, Prof. Stuart and others. That the enemies of the gospel, the unbelieving Jews, called verse 27, "the adversaries," and the apostate christians who had trampled under foot the Son of God, then actually suffered a punishment unspeakably more fearful and sorer than mere death by stoning, which was inflicted on the Jew who apostatized from the religion of Moses, is at once a matter of prophecy and of fact. Our Lord himself foretold that the day of Jerusalem's overthrow should be a season of tribulation, such as never had been from the beginning of the world, and such as should never be again. When going to the cross, he turned to the women who followed and lamented his fate, and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. For behold the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" In the same manner St. Paul speaks of "the wrath of God coming on them [the Jews,] to the uttermost." Now that these prophesies and intimations were all fulfilled, and fulfilled too in the most remarkable manner, is evident from Josephus, whose history of the Jewish War is in many places the best commentary on parts of the New Testament.

Your eighth argument in favor of the endless misery of the

wicked, is derived from "what is said of them at the resurrection." You refer to 1 Cor. xv. and tell us with singular coolness, that here "we read of a resurrection to eternal life. But this does not embrace all men but only the righteous." Indeed! then I suppose we read there only of the death of the righteous. The apostle was arguing that if Christ had not risen from the dead then there was no resurrection, and *vice versa*, if there were no resurrection of the dead, then Christ was not risen. "But now," says he, "is Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." But this does not embrace all men, says Mr. Remington, but only the righteous! Be so good, sir, as to answer me two questions. 1. Are the ALL who die in Adam *all men*, or only the righteous? For no man in his right mind will contend for a moment that the *all* to be made alive in Christ, are not the same who die in Adam. That is, if all men die in Adam, all men shall be made alive in Christ; or the apostle, to use the mildest term possible, was mistaken. 2. Will any man made alive in Christ be eternally unholy and unhappy? That is, will Jesus Christ give "life and immortality" to any who are to be forever his enemies and blaspheme his name? For myself, I am frank to confess, that I know of no life beyond this present, save as conferred by Jesus Christ. That he will confer an unholy and unhappy life upon any of those who die in Adam, must be proved before I am called upon to believe it; and the same argument that shall prove this will disprove these words of John, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." What, the Son of God manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and yet conferring life and immortality upon them! Believe it who may. This would be doing the kingdom of Satan a service which Jesus Christ will hardly perform. It would be peopling hell, and filling half the universe with sin and suffering forever! Such was not the object of Christ's mission, and such, I feel assured, will not be its result.

You find one passage of Scripture in which the resurrection of the *just* is mentioned, and thence you are pleased to infer the resurrection of the *unjust*. This inference, however, is not to be sustained. The phraseology was in conformity to the opinions of the Pharisees, who, according to Josephus, believed in the resurrection of the *just*, but in no resurrection of the wicked. Their resurrection, however, was little more than a Pythagorean metempsychosis; for the just who alone were to enjoy it, were only privileged to return and assume another human body, and thus repeat their former life. You find another text in which the resurrection of the *unjust* is distinctly asserted. St. Paul, when before Felix, Acts xxiv. 14, 15, said, "But this I confess unto thee, that after the manner they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law, and in the prophets; and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Here let it be observed, that the resurrection of the dead allowed by the Jews, was not the same either in kind or extent, as that preached by Jesus Christ and his apostles. It was, in the opinion of the former, little better than a transmigration of souls, and even that was confined to such as they called the just. The apostle, therefore, added with the greatest propriety, the explanatory words, "both of the just and unjust," to express the universality of the resurrection of the dead. But did the apostle express or intimate the doctrine of endless misery by so doing? To answer this question one needs only to glance at the language which he employed. For it is worthy of remark, that whatever were to be the results of the resurrection of the unjust, it was still such an event as the apostle could hope for. But can one hope for what he does not desire? and can a good man desire the resurrection of the wicked if it is to be followed by unspeakable and endless torments? One must be worse than the rich man in hades, to indulge in such a wish. But so it is: what the great apostle of the Gentiles hoped for, has become in after times an event to be deprecated as the bitterest curse to be inflicted by Almighty vengeance on suffering humanity.

But is there not one passage of Scripture relating to the resurrection on which the hopes of orthodoxy may be suspended, and from which it may "infer" the mild and peace-giving doctrine of endless hell torments? Yes there is one; one that has been quoted on this point time out of mind. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." John v. 28, 29. For a full and satisfactory exposition of this passage, I beg leave to refer to a Sermon on the subject by Rev. Sylvanus Cobb. Still as you indulge in a somewhat protracted examination of this favorite text, I must be permitted to follow you with a few remarks.

You assume that the Savior here speaks of a literal resurrection; "for who," you say, "ever heard of a spiritual resurrection to damnation?" You also assert that no less than three resurrections are spoken of in this chapter: 1, a spiritual one, verse 24; 2, a literal one, applied to individuals whom our Lord miraculously raised from the dead, but who were subject to death again, verse 25; 3, the resurrection of all that have died, verse 29. This may pass for assertion, for you present no evidence of its truth, and I think no evidence is to be had. There is something extremely improbable in the supposition that in the space of four short verses, our Lord should speak of three kinds of resurrection! I must have a safer interpreter than I can regard yourself, before adopting so crude a fancy.

In examining the text before us, one inquiry is very important, viz., Was our Savior here speaking of the resurrection of the dead to a state of life and immortality? The Greek scholar knows that as the article is here omitted, the simplest and probably the true translation of the passage would be, "they that have done good to a resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to a resurrection of damnation." By rendering as they have done, and inserting the article, the translators of our common version, have given a speciality to the meaning of the word resurrection, which the original does not

justify. This remark will be entitled to the more consideration when it is remembered that the word *anastasis* has a vastly greater latitude of meaning than our word *resurrection*, by which it is generally rendered. In the primitive import of the word *anastasis*, says Dr. Campbell, "it denotes simply being raised from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence, or a return to such a state after an interruption. Agreeably, therefore, to the original import, *rising* from a seat is properly termed *anastasis*; so is awaking out of sleep, or promotion from an inferior condition."

At verse 24 our Lord said, "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Here let it be remarked that our Savior employs much the same terms as we find in the text. Life in verse 29, corresponds with everlasting life in verse 24; and damnation in verse 29, is the same word in the original as condemnation in verse 24. Are these words in verse 24 to be taken in a spiritual, and in verse 29 in a literal sense? Where then is the proof? Verse 25 is explanatory of verse 24. At verse 27 another important idea is introduced, one at which the Jews were astonished and offended, viz., that authority is given to the Son of man to execute judgment also. In verses 28 and 29 the nature of this judgment is set forth, and the extent of the office of the Son of man. It was not a few individuals who were to hear his voice, and so attend to it as to live; but all that people, good and bad, believers and unbelievers, were to hear and come forth, some to life and peace, and some to punishment and suffering. A great change was to take place in their condition; a change happy on the one hand and unhappy on the other.

This interpretation was maintained long ago by Deusing, was admitted by Dr. Lightfoot, and explained at large more recently by Rev. Newcome Cappe, a pupil of Dr. Doddridge. After giving the common exposition, Lightfoot says, "These words might also be applied to a spiritual resurrection as were the former, and (so *coming out of the graves* meaneth Ezek. xxxvii. 12,) the words of the verse following being only trans-

lated and glossed thus—*And they shall come forth, they that have done good, after they hear his voice in the gospel, to the [a] resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, after they hear the gospel, unto the [a] resurrection of damnation.*" For Mr. Cappe's paraphrase, I must refer to his works or to Paige's "Selections."

With due respect, I am yours, &c.

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XVI.

Dear Sir—"The endless punishment of the wicked," you tell us in the ninth place, "is certain—from the circumstances under which they will be placed at the judgment of the great day. For then they will have no Savior. Jesus Christ now sustains the character of the Savior, but in that day, he will cease to retain this relation to the human family, and be the 'judge of the quick and the dead.'"

Allow me to ask one or two questions. If, as you say, Christ now sustains the character of SAVIOR to the human family, and is to sustain this character till the day of judgment, how happens it that the human family is not or will not be saved? Is Christ the Savior of those who are never to be saved? Does he now sustain such a character or relation towards them? These are questions which my Methodist friends have never answered. Again, if there is to be such a total change in the character and relations of Jesus Christ at the day of judgment, will you permit me to inquire what the apostle means when he speaks of him as "the same yesterday, to-day and forever?" I have sometimes heard it said, that Jesus Christ is now the *Lamb* of God, but at the judgment day, he will become a *Lion*. Perhaps so, but where is the *thus saith the Lord*?

There is another difficulty. You quote from somebody who

says, "Christ is now our Mediator, and as such administers a mediatorial government, * * * but then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father! 1 Cor. xv. 24. Then he will descend from the mediatorial throne, and the benefits of his atonement will be no longer available. To suppose that Christ can act as the sinner's judge, and sentence him to hell, and at the same time be the sinner's Mediator and advocata to procure his deliverance from hell, is palpably absurd."

That Christ is now our Mediator, and administers a mediatorial government, is one of the clearest truths of revelation; and that he is ultimately to deliver up the kingdom to God the Father, is also true. But it is not true that there is to be a judgment, or that he is to act as a judge, after he descends from the mediatorial throne. The moment he leaves that throne, "shall the Son also himself be subject to the Father." But I wish you to observe, that there is one condition to be fulfilled by Christ, before he can surrender the mediatorial kingdom; that condition is *the perfect accomplishment of the purpose for which he was appointed Mediator*. There is not a particle of evidence either in the Bible or to be derived from the nature of the subject, that there is to be a general judgment, or any judgment, after the close of Christ's mediatorial reign. His office terminates with this event; but his office terminates only with the accomplishment of his divine mission; only when he has seen of the travail of his soul and is satisfied, Isa. liii. 11,—only "when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power; for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. * * * And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that did put all things under him, that GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL."

This is the result of Christ's mediatorial government, as revealed in the Scriptures. If you know of any judgment or of any suffering in the moral universe, after this event, it becomes you to announce it to the world. St. Paul and other inspired writers leave us precisely here; all things subject to the Son; the Son himself subject to the Father; and God the Father, all

in all! But perhaps you are ready to reply, that all shall indeed be subject to the Son, as Dr. Scott says, "some in one way and some in another;" that a part of the human race will joyfully acknowledge him in heaven as their friend and Savior, and that others will confess his power and "vindictive justice" in hell. This has been said before: but I beg you to observe, that there are two kinds of enemies, if I may be allowed the expression, here spoken of by the apostle. The first, embracing "all rule, and all authority and power," and "death, the last enemy," are to be *put down and destroyed*. The latter embracing what are called "all enemies," "all things" are to be *subdued, put under the feet, and subjected* to Christ. Some doubt has been entertained by the commentators with respect to the meaning of the terms "all rule and all authority and power." Some have supposed them to mean *the empires and kingdoms of this world*; but others, as Archbishop Newcome and Dr. Bloomfield take them of those adverse powers which hinder the consummation of the felicity obtained for us by Christ, and are a hindrance to the divine counsel for the completion of man's restoration to the favor of God; namely, the kingdom of Satan, *sin, misery and death*. See Bloomfield's New Testament. These enemies, remember, are to be *abolished, destroyed*. "But death," says Dr. Clarke, "cannot be destroyed, by there simply being no farther death; death can only be destroyed and annihilated by a *general resurrection*; if there is no general resurrection, it is most evident that death will still retain his empire." The same may be said of *sin and misery*, for sin is the sting of death, and misery is the consequence of sin. And all these are "the works of the devil," which the Son of God was manifested to destroy. 1 John iii. 8.

• But for the other class of enemies there is reserved a different fortune. They are denominated by the apostle, "all things," which term undoubtedly means *the whole creation*, or all created rational beings, all men. Christ's kingdom is a moral kingdom, and power was given him over all flesh. All human beings belong to him, they are not their own, they are bought with a price; they are placed under his govern-

ment, and shall finally be subjected to him by the constraining influences of his spirit and love. For, let it be observed, that as Christ is to be subject to the Father, after the surrender of his kingdom, so are all things, all men, to be subject to the Son, before that surrender can be made. And as the same words are employed, so the same kind of subjection seems plainly expressed. There is not on the one hand a willing, and the other a compulsory subjection. Nothing is more manifest than that the apostle spoke of a moral subjection, effected, as such a subjection can only be, by moral means. If simple power alone was needed,—and nothing else can be needed to render those for whom Christ died, endlessly miserable,—then the mediatorial reign might be closed to-day, as well as at any subsequent period. In one sense, all things are as completely subject to Christ at this moment, as they ever can be. He is the constituted Lord and King, and there is no power that can deliver them out of his hands. But it was to make all men the subjects of his moral kingdom and the participants of his grace and love that Christ died. And as the apostle says “He must reign,” till the object is accomplished.

These considerations may show how exceedingly unsatisfactory are your reasonings on this point. You assume that there is to be a great day of general judgment after Christ descends from his mediatorial throne and delivers up his kingdom, and God is all in all. On this piece of absurdity, destitute, as it necessarily is, of every shade of countenance from Scripture, you rear your ninth argument for endless misery!

In the tenth and last place, you tell us that “the endless punishment of the wicked is absolutely certain from what the Scriptures assert concerning their condition subsequent to the judgment.”

My examination of the former article might supercede the necessity of farther remarks here. For if you cannot prove the fact of a general judgment after the close of the mediatorial reign, the consequences which you attempt to draw from any thing subsequent to that judgment, are futile in the extreme. But I must dwell a few moments on this part of your

labor. "Where," you inquire, "will sinners be after the judgment is past? They can not be in heaven, for there are no '*tribulation and anguish*;' but these shall be their portion. They can not be in heaven, we repeat, for the '*presence*' of God and '*the glory of his power*' are there; but they shall be banished from his presence and the glory of his power." But enough of this. "What then will become of the wicked after the judgment of the great day? Let the inspired apostle John answer, Rev. xx. 11—15." This passage, to which the reader may refer, you tell us, "is a very natural description of the judgment." Very natural, no doubt. But do you know what it means? Perfectly. It contains the following particulars: 1. The judge upon his throne. 2. The resurrection of all the dead. 3. The assemblage of all the human family before the throne of judgment. 4. The abolition of death, or mortality, and hell, (*hades*,) *the place for separate spirits*, which will then be no longer needful. 5. The dead are to be judged according to the various dispensations under which they may have lived. 6. The final doom of the wicked is here stated. They 'are cast into the lake of fire'! All very natural, indeed, very!

But is it not a little surprising, Mr. Remington, that when Paul was treating of the resurrection of the dead, of the end of the mediatorial kingdom and the results of the reign of Jesus Christ, he should never furnish any description, natural or unnatural, of this awful and final judgment? In no part of the Bible would such a description have found so appropriate a place as in 1 Cor. xv. And yet you will look in vain for it there. But in the book of Revelation, the most highly figurative and most difficult book in the Bible, in the midst of visions which seem almost to bid defiance to interpretation, you find a very natural description of this event! Here is not only a description of the final judgment, but also of all its consequences; the wicked "are cast in the lake of fire," and the righteous go "into that pure and holy place where the glorified shall dwell forever." The wages of sin is death, "the second death." "Hope has taken its flight from the wicked, and their doom is unalterable." "He that is unjust, let him

be unjust still, and he which is filthy let him be filthy still ; and he that is holy let him be holy still."

But you seem utterly to forget, that if the words of the writer are entitled to any respect whatever, all these things were about to take place eighteen centuries ago ! The first verse of this mystical book announces its contents and the period of its fulfilment. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants *things which must shortly come to pass.*" And it is closed with a similar declaration. "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book ; *for the time is at hand.* "He that is unjust let him be unjust still ; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still, &c. And behold, *I come quickly*, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." And yet with these plain and unequivocal declarations that the prophecies of this book were to have a speedy fulfilment, commentators have applied it to every thing and almost to every period of time and eternity. To this purpose you are pleased to quote your learned critic, Dr. Clarke. You represent him as saying that this book "may be considered as a prophet continued in the church of God, uttering predictions relative to all times, which have their successive fulfilment as ages roll on ; and thus it stands in the Christian Church, in the place of a succession of prophets in the Jewish Church, and by this especial economy, prophecy is still continued, is always speaking ; and yet a succession of prophets is rendered unnecessary." And you add your testimony to the authority of the Dr. by saying that "a part of this prophecy is doubtless fulfilled ; but its complete fulfilment will not take place until the final consummation of all things." Very probable ! But the probability would be somewhat greater if it had not been distinctly and repeatedly asserted in the book itself, that its prophecies related to things which were shortly to come to pass.

Perhaps you are not aware, however, that you do Dr. Clarke great injustice in quoting him as you do above. The Dr. confesses that he cannot pretend to explain the book, and repeatedly says he does not understand it, and is satisfied that not one who has written on the subject knows any thing more

of it than himself. What you ascribe to him as his opinion is merely "a conjecture"; and a very wild conjecture it certainly is!

What you say of the date of the book of Revelation is equally unsatisfactory. It was written, you tell us, "between the years A. D. 90 and 100. In this I believe most ecclesiastical writers, and the most learned commentators and Biblical critics agree." The inference is made to refute the opinions of certain authors which I had quoted. Dr. Lardner has referred this book to A. D. 95, 96 or 97. Dr. Clarke says, "The reasoning of Dr. Lardner, relative to the date of this book, is by no means satisfactory to many other critics, who consider it to have been written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem; and in this opinion they are supported by the most respectable testimonies among the ancients, though the contrary was the more general opinion." And as the favorers of its earlier date, i. e. that it was written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, Dr. Clarke enumerates "Hentenius, Harduin, Lightfoot, Hammond, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Wetstein and others." See also Horne's Introduction.

Such are the ten arguments you offer us to prove the endless punishment of a part of the human race. Are they conclusive? Nay, are they satisfactory? Various as they are, and important as you seem to regard them, there is not one that carries any conviction with it. They are chiefly inferential and far-fetched, founded on sheer assumptions, and often exhibiting singular instances of most illogical reasoning. And is it upon such a tissue of assumptions and fallacies and inferences, that a faith in the doctrine of endless misery should be predicated? That doctrine, if true, can be proved, and it ought to be proved before any man allows himself to believe it; and proved too in the clearest and most conclusive manner. And he who adopts it, and he who preaches it, without that proof, sin alike against humanity and God. It is a doctrine at war with every principle of our nature, and inconsistent with every just conception of the Divine character as revealed in the Scriptures, and illustrated in his works and government. Under these circumstances, what kind of proof

ought to be demanded on which to rest the faith of our souls ? Is any thing, and every thing, or nothing—is an inference, an obscure hint, a suspicion, a fear, to be taken as evidence that God will torment, world without end, a large part of his moral creation ? And yet what more have you furnished ? In the outset you boasted of *a thus saith the Lord*, and of “positive proof ;” but your whole argument from the beginning to the end, is destitute of every trace of such proof. What kind of proof, let me ask, would the community require to convince them that Washington was a base, selfish, and ambitious tyrant, who spent his life in plotting the ruin of his country ? Would it not demand the clearest and most unquestionable testimony, fortified on every hand and cumulated almost beyond all parallel ? And would it not even then find ground for doubts in the public life and benevolent labors of the Father of his country ? If it were asserted that Howard was a monster of cruelty, what proof, I ask, would the world demand before it could yield the assertion a full and implicit credence ? In either of these cases, such an argument as you have here made out, would be treated, as it would deserve, with contempt, and its author made the object of universal and merited reprobation. But let the subject be changed ; let the character and government of God be misrepresented and calumniated ; let him be held up as a monster, creating millions on purpose to damn them everlastingly, or with the infallible foreknowledge that such a fate awaits them and will be suffered by them, and the world is ready to believe it, and believe it on any evidence, or no evidence, on the rashest interpretations of words and sentences, on far-fetched inferences, on the slightest and most precarious analogies, indeed, on any thing that any man has the hardihood to call evidence, no matter how fanciful, or how false ! Among the most astonishing facts of the moral world, stands this general credulity in all that is dishonorable and blasphemous relative to the Universal Creator. It furnishes one of the strongest evidences of man’s awful depravity. Represent God as sustaining a character compared with which that of Nero is excellence, and the world is ready to make it an article of religious faith. Speak of him,

however, as a universal Father, who created to bless, and who will in the fulness of time accomplish his good pleasure in the everlasting felicity of his moral creation ; and men shake their heads, and tell you that this is "too good to be true." Prove from the volumes of Nature and Revelation that God "is good unto all and that his tender mercies are over all his works," and that he "sent his Son to be the Savior of the world," and they think you a fond deceiver, or call you an emissary of Satan !

The time was, Mr. Remington, when persecution and bloodshed, and all the horrors of the stake and the Inquisition, were thought consistent with humanity, and with the religion of him who died for his enemies and persecutors. The time was when the hanging of witches was believed to be a good and pious work. The time was, too, when a faith in election and reprobation was essential to orthodoxy, and when infant damnation was preached as a godly and edifying doctrine. We now look back on those times with wonder, and deem it strange that man could be so ignorant or so infatuated. But the time has not yet come, though it is rapidly approaching, when the doctrine of endless misery, which is now so generally believed and so highly esteemed, and thought so very essential to the christian faith and christian character, shall have taken its place among the abominations of by-gone days, and christians will wonder at its former prevalence as we do now at the horrors of the dark ages !

As ever yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XVII.

Dear Sir—I now pass to the consideration of your third lecture, in which you contrast “the gift of God which is eternal life, with the wages of sin which is death.”

After alluding to the horrible miseries which await the sinner in a future state, and which you have so abundantly proved in your preceding lectures, you are pleased to say—“But fearful and dreadful as will be the condition of all such as die in their sins, yet there is no necessity for a soul’s perishing, for God has made an ample provision for our salvation.” You then add divers scraps of poetry, setting forth in glowing colors the goodness and love of God, and the anxiety he feels for the happiness of the human race.

This is certainly very well, but you must allow me to doubt whether it is any thing better than mere declamation, and employed most incongruously with the whole tenor and spirit of your system. With all your free agency, you have no belief in man’s ability to turn himself, and, unaided by revelation and the accompanying spirit of God, to work out his own salvation. Now you cannot be ignorant that four thousand years of idolatry and darkness passed away before the true light shined upon the world; and that during this period almost countless millions of human beings lived and died, not only destitute of “the means of grace,” but even of the knowledge of the only living and true God. Since the christian era, in like manner, the number of those who have had the offers of the gospel have constituted but a very small portion of the world, and even now only about one fourth part of the inhabitants of the earth know any thing of christianity and the way of salvation. All the rest, with the whole race who lived before Christ, one little people alone excepted, must necessarily go down to hell! According to this, your theory, perhaps one in a thousand of those who have already lived, may be

saved, and not more than one in five hundred has even had the slightest opportunity

"To 'scape from hell and fly to heaven."

And yet the pastor of the Willet street church tells us with all becoming gravity, that "there is no necessity for a soul's perishing!"—that "we need not die. The water of life is abundant."

'Its streams the whole creation reach,
So plenteous is the store!'"

Astonishing, indeed, is such language in the lips of one who knows, or who ought to know, that it contains scarcely a semblance of truth. What is it but something worse than folly, to assert that God is not willing that any should perish, while at the same time it is acknowledged that Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven given among men whereby a soul can be saved, and yet that millions of millions have died in their sins without ever hearing or having the possibility of hearing that name?

In this lecture you institute three inquiries: "1. What are we to understand by eternal life? 2. By what proof do we know that it is the gift of God? 3. We shall inquire unto whom it is given." Eternal life you define to be "the consummation of all the benefits derived from the life, death, resurrection and intercessions of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is directly the opposite of the penalty of the divine law." You add, "the antithesis which the Scriptures exhibit between the penalty of the law, and this great and glorious gift of God through Jesus Christ, is perfect and will hold good throughout. The penalty of the law is death—the gift of God is life." That is, "death" is in all respects equal to "eternal life;" and as a consequence, man merits by *the least sin* he can commit, a punishment that is throughout the perfect opposite of "the great and glorious gift of God through Jesus Christ!" Or to make the conclusion still more obvious, man is able to do himself as much evil in one instant, as Almighty God can confer good upon him throughout eternity!! This is the doctrine of the orthodox world, and the necessary inference from its interpretation of that much abused text of Scripture, Rom.

vi. 23. The absurdity of such a consequence is too obvious, one would think, to avoid being seen, but it is also too important for the support of that amiable dogma, endless misery, to be rejected. It matters little in what light it is viewed ; for it either brings the Omnipotent down to the level of man, or else it exalts man to a kind of equality with God. It represents man to be as capable of doing an endless and infinite evil, as God himself is of doing an endless and infinite good. I regard this as not merely absurd, but as blasphemous. It is an insult alike to reason, and every sentiment of purity and reverence. It is contempt thrown upon the word of God and the character of its Author. When will the christian world have ceased to indulge in these wretched puerilities, and be willing to interpret the word of divine truth in a manner worthy of itself ?

In the passage of Scripture under consideration, there is, as I observed in my sermon upon it, three pairs of antithetical terms : 1. Wages is contrasted with gift. 2. Sin, personified, is contrasted with God. 3. Death is contrasted with eternal life. Now every one knows that because *wages* is contrasted with *gift*, it is by no means necessary to suppose that the gift is just equal in all respects and only equal to the wages. So *sin* is contrasted with *God*, but he would deserve a home in the mad house who should thence argue that sin, considered as a personal being, is altogether equal to the Almighty. The truth is, these antithetical terms are properly used by the apostle ; they are not merely elegant, but give great force to the expression ; the contrast, however, does not consist in the perfect equality of the objects contrasted, but in the opposition or dissimilarity of their nature.

But, as if the apostle anticipated the abuses that would be heaped upon his language, and was anxious to provide against them, he himself introduced the word *eternal* in connexion with *life*, to show that, while in its nature it was the opposite of *death*, it indefinitely, perhaps I should say infinitely surpassed it in point of duration.

If the doctrine of *eternal death* which you so ardently advocate, is true, is it not a matter of wonder that not one of the

inspired writers ever once mentioned it? Of *eternal life* the New Testament writers spoke familiarly and constantly. They contrasted it in many instances with *death*, but never with *eternal death*. I ask you, I ask any believer in endless misery, to account for this fact. Were the apostles so familiar with the modern doctrine of antithesis, and with the interpretations it receives, as to think it unnecessary to express themselves fully on this point, and thus left it to the ingenuity of their readers to form as best they could their faith in endless torments? Or were they so parsimonious of words that they could never afford to write *eternal* in connexion with *death*? Some explanation of this remarkable fact should be furnished, that we may know how to account for its existence. If the inspired writers believed in *eternal death*, why have they not mentioned it? If they did not, what is your authority for believing it?

You are good enough to furnish us with six or seven instances of antithesis for the purpose of showing its nature, and also aiding you in explaining the passage we have now been considering. I shall not stop to examine them or to follow you in your winding way over and about them, because with all your exposition they add nothing to Rom vi. 23. Indeed, this is by far the most favorable passage in the Bible for proving the doctrine of eternal death. And if you cannot find and establish that doctrine here, it is in vain for you to appeal to other texts.

Still I cannot but smile at your array of antithetical passages of Scripture introduced to sustain your favorite doctrine. I am unable, however, with my best efforts to see how you extract endless misery from this proverb—"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness, but the righteous hath hope in his death;" or how you make it out from Matt. vii. 13; 14, where "destruction" is contrasted with "life." True, you very kindly aid our Savior by changing "life" into "*life eternal*," and of course construe "destruction" to mean nothing more nor less than "eternal death, 'soul and body in hell.'" With such talents for interpreting Scripture, you can hardly fail of succeeding in any undertaking. He who can

prove the doctrine of *eternal death*, needs entertain no fears of discomfiture, let him assume what absurdity he may.

You close your observations under the first head of your discourse with the remark that, "as eternal death is the separation from God and the glory of his power, and a punishment of everlasting destruction, it must be a deprivation of all positive good which we are capacitated to enjoy, and the infliction of all the positive evil which we are capable of enduring." I cannot avoid comparing this with what you told us in your second lecture, that God "recognizes man as a free moral agent, and that he will never deprive him of this necessary constituent of his moral nature for the purpose of making him either holy and happy, or sinful and miserable:" and that God "will hereafter make him just as holy and happy as he can." If depriving the sinner of all positive good which he is capable of enjoying, and inflicting upon him all the positive evil which he is capable of suffering, be doing the *best* by the poor creatures that God can do, you would confer a favor by informing me what would be the *worst*. And I should also acknowledge my obligations if you would inform me what is the difference between the best that your God can hereafter do to the sinner, and the worst that your Devil could do. I have thought on this subject considerably, and must confess that I cannot see much difference between the effects of infinite goodness and love in this case, and infinite malignity: that is, if such a being as the Devil had the sole disposal of sinners, and were inclined to do the very worst that the Devil himself could do, it would still be much the same as what "the Father of mercies and God of all grace" actually will do, while in accordance with his infinite compassion, he makes them "just as happy as he can." Perhaps if you were to prosecute this train of thought you might be led with the good and orthodox Dr. Emmons, to conclude that infinite goodness is rather more terrible than infinite malice would be; at all events, I would advise you to institute the curious inquiry whether in the course of these lectures, you have not sometimes introduced the character of the devil under the name of God. So small a mistake as this might, I think, be easily made by you,

though I do not presume that it would wholly vitiate the argument.

Under your second head in this lecture, you attempt to prove that "eternal life is the gift of God. It is not of ourselves, for it is obtained through Jesus Christ our Lord." He purchased it for us, and "prepares the soul" for its enjoyment, by the efficacy of his own blood and the operations of his holy spirit." Eternal life, you tell us, is not the reward of works. "We are rewarded *according* to our works, but not *for* our works." A very nice distinction; rather too nice to be seen or conceived. But does not this apply to our evil, as well as our good acts. Is there not indeed the same evidence to prove that the sinner shall be rewarded *according* to, but not *for* his works, as there is that the righteous shall? Again, if our happiness and misery throughout eternity be only *according* to our works here, I am afraid, Br. Remington, that we shall have little to boast of. I know not how it may be with your perfect Methodists, but we Universalists are constrained to believe that we are very well rewarded in this world for all the good we do here; and that the inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away; reserved for us in heaven, will be a *gift*, not a *reward*, and a gift too, *according* to the love and grace of God, and not according to our poor and imperfect works in this present life.

You tell us "there are degrees of glory among the saints in heaven, as one star differeth from another star in glory!—Eternal life entitles us to an admittance into heaven, and is heaven itself. But the reward of our works will be an increase of our happiness in heaven." This is a very pleasing doctrine, no doubt, and must greatly encourage your perfectionists, who thus have a fair prospect of attaining "the uppermost rooms" and "the chief seats" in our Father's house. But I fear these disinterested christians will yet be disappointed. It is not quite clear to my mind that heaven is to be awarded to mortals, either *for* or *according* to their works.—The apostle speaks, 2 Tim. i. 9, of God "who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, *not according to our works*, but according to his own purpose and grace." And perhaps

what was thus begun, "not according to our works," will be finished as it was begun, according to the divine purpose and grace. And should this suspicion happen to be well founded, instead of being distinguished as special favorites in heaven, you may find yourselves at last, much in the condition of certain men in the parable, "who supposed that they should have received more than their fellows, but likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou has made them *equal unto us*, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." The reply to these very *natural* and grievous complaints was just, if it was not satisfactory. "But he answered one of them and said, friend, I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way; *I will give unto this last even as unto thee*. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?"

Of one thing, Br. Remington, we may rest assured; God, the judge of all the earth, will do right. We shall be rewarded and punished according to our works. No good act and no evil act will be permitted to escape the all-seeing eye, and the equitable retributions of a holy and just God. But that our good works here are to make us great and exalt us to dignity in heaven and through eternity, is not so clear nor so consonant with the spirit of the gospel. As ever, yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XVIII.

Dear Sir—Under the third head of this lecture you propose the following important question: "Unto whom will eternal life be given?" To this you reply, "that it will not be given to all the human family indiscriminately. It is not promised to all men, either directly or indirectly. We challenge the whole world to produce a single passage of *Holy Writ*, which contains the promise or assurance that God will give to each member of the family of Adam eternal life."

This is very confidently said, and, no doubt, in all sincerity. But if you will allow so humble an individual as myself to accept a challenge which was boastingly given to the whole world, I will call your attention to Rom. v. 12—21. Here is language which no system of doctrine, or philosophy, which no subtlety or hair-splitting, and no learning or criticism or cavilling will enable you to avoid. It is plain, direct and irrefutable; and proves, if words can prove any thing, that, "as by the offence of one many were made sinners; so by the righteousness of one shall [the same] many be made righteous;" and that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." "Thus we find," says Dr. Clarke, "that the salvation from sin is here as *extensive* and *complete* as the guilt and contamination of sin; death is conquered, hell disappointed, the devil confounded, and sin totally destroyed." It is, as Dr. Watts so well and evangelically sung—

"All that the reign of sin destroyed
Shall Zion's King restore,
And from the treasures of the Lord,
Give boundless blessings more."

It is thus orthodox men write and speak when they forget their creeds and yield themselves up to the influence of gospel

truth! They find occasion for triumph in the all-conquering grace of God, and rejoice in the prospect of the complete destruction of death and sin. But if "death is conquered, * * and sin totally destroyed," as Dr. Clarke affirms on the clear Scripture warrant of the passage before us, it is evident that one text, at least, can be produced which fully answers what you demand. Others, however, shall not be withheld. When the apostle says that, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," what does he affirm but that "as we [all] have borne the image of the earthy, [the first Adam,] we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [the second Adam, the Lord from heaven]?" What is it to be made alive in Christ, if it be not to participate in a life that is divine and eternal? "The bread of God is he which came down from heaven and giveth life to the world." Who, Mr. Remington, are the world? Whom did Christ come to die for and to save? A few elect? No: you know, what all revelation affirms, that Christ came to save all men. He died for all; gave himself a ransom for all; and is the propitiation "for the sins of the whole world." This, then, is the world to which the Son of God "giveth life." But let me refer you to 1 John v. 8—12, Eph. i. 9—11, Rom. viii. 19—21, Philip. ii. 9—11, &c. And here allow me to remark, that one of the greatest errors of your sect consists in proposing no object of positive faith, no truth actually existing to be believed; no Savior really ours, to be accepted and loved. Every thing is conditional, vacillating and unstable. The gospel is no gospel till we believe it; Christ is no Savior, till we receive him and make him such. Now I cannot but think that the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation is true, and as true before, as after we believe it. Christ died for us, and is our Savior, before we receive him and own him in this character. And God must have given us eternal life, before we come into its possession. It was given us in Christ Jesus. "This," says the apostle, "is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." This being a positive fact, admitting no conditions and no doubt, the apostle was justified in affirming that "he that believeth not God hath

made him a liar ; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." If it may be supposed that God hath not given eternal life "to each member of the family of Adam," then it follows, that those thus excepted in this grant, cannot be guilty of making God a liar, by disbelieving what he has never affirmed. That the wicked do not now enjoy any thing of eternal life, is a clear truth ; but it is none the less true that God has given it in Christ, who is "the head of every man," and the "Lord of all;" and upon this fact are predicated all the invitations of the gospel, and all the aggravated sin of unbelief. It is because men reject the *truth*, that they are condemned, not that they disbelieve a dream, an illusion.

But I pass to your examination of the proof texts of Universalism. Of these you adduce *eight* only ; and you speak of them as "the most prominent texts of Scripture which are employed by our opponents to prove their doctrine." You add with a most affecting tone of regret, that you "are obliged to conclude that not *one* of *them*, when properly explained, contains the least semblance that all men will indiscriminately go to heaven." It must be acknowledged, however, that anxious as you were to detect some proof of so desirable a doctrine, these few passages were despatched in a most marvellous and business-like manner. I have neither time nor disposition to follow you step by step, over this part of your labors ; I must therefore be content with merely glancing at your method of *properly explaining* God's holy word.

The first text you present us, is Isa. xlv. 23. "Unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." The whole passage, which it was not convenient for you to quote, reads thus—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return ; that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." I omit the word *one*, introduced without any reason by the translators.

The first remark you make on this text is, that "if it refers to the gospel, and is fulfilled in this world, it is only a decla-

ration of what God will have men do in order to be saved. It does not say that they shall *infallibly* bow the knee and confess to God; but they shall do this if they are saved." That the passage "refers to the gospel," admits no doubt; at least, it is so explained by the commentators. That it "is fulfilled in this world," is neither said nor intimated. And that it does say that "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess to God," and this infallibly, is as certain as language can express, or the oath of God can make, any thing. "If the text means that all men do bow the knee and confess to God in this world, then it is not true." Very probable: but I hope the erudite pastor of the Willet street church is not ignorant that the passage neither says nor means any such thing. Yet it does say and mean, what is true as God's word is true, that Jehovah has sworn by himself, that every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear, truly shall say, "in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Whether this is to be fulfilled in this world or another, is not said; but all that is said, is true, notwithstanding your sceptical cavils. Once more you say; "If this text is not fulfilled in this world, as perhaps, Universalists may say, then we ask, to what period are we to look for its fulfilment?" To this question you reply that "St. Paul quotes, and applies it to the judgment." Rom. xiv. 10—12. That St. Paul alludes to it in this passage is probable, but that he applies it to the judgment is not true. From the fact set forth in the prophecy, that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess to God, the apostle infers that christians ought not to judge one another any more, since they must all give account, each one for himself, to God. That any allusion is here made, to a future general judgment, is utterly without proof. Your delightful inferences, therefore, that every knee will bow, but then it will be too late for sinners to obtain pardon; that every tongue will confess to God, but it will then be too late to obtain forgiveness of sins; that Christ will then be judge, and not the "mediator between God and men;" all these are the groundless dreams of poor miscalled orthodoxy. But suppose it were true, that there were to be ten thousand future general judgments, how would that circumstance vitiate

the fact so clearly expressed in this prophecy, that unto God every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear; surely shall say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength?—Would this annul the truth asserted by the apostle, that God hath highly exalted Jesus and given him a name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father? But observe one condition; the apostle declares that “no man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost.”

The next passage to which you call attention is Isa. xxv. 6—8. You tell us with great candor, that “if this passage can be of any possible service to Universalists, it must refer to the Gospel; otherwise it belongs entirely to this world, and has nothing to do with the world to come. We are willing to allow that it is a prediction concerning the church of Christ, and the provisions and blessings received and enjoyed within her pale.” Perhaps had you said that it is a prediction of the great, the common, or universal salvation, wrought out in God’s mountain by Jesus Christ, you would have been much nearer the truth. “The Church of God” you are pleased to make the place where this feast is celebrated. I can see no reason for this interpretation, as “mount Sion” of which the apostle speaks in Heb. xii. 22, is not the Church as you imagine, but “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” as the apostle explains himself. But granting this evasive conceit, does it annul the plain meaning of the prophecy? Is it not still true that God the Lord of hosts has made or shall make unto all people a feast, and that he has or shall destroy the covering cast over all people and the veil that is spread over all nations, that he has or shall swallow up death in victory or forever, and wipe away tears from off all faces? It matters not what “this mountain” may signify, whether Zion or Calvary, or the Church, the truths made known in the prophecy are still truths, and not to be rejected save by the spirit of infidelity. You enumerate among the blessings mentioned in this prophecy, *pardon, divine light, victory over death* and a

deliverance from all sorrow" which you tell us "are enjoyed in 'God's holy mountain,' and not extended to all the world." This is indeed a bold contradiction of Almighty God. "All people," "all nations," according to your mode of properly explaining Scripture, do not mean "all the world," but the Church! Let us pass on.

You now bring us to the New Testament. The Old is exhausted! Here we are introduced to John iii. 17: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him *might* be saved." Here you tell us, "the word *might* qualifies the sense of this passage and implies the *possibility*, but not the *certainty* of the salvation of all men." In the first place you ought to know that the original *might* have been translated, *should* be saved as well as *might* be saved. And in this case your qualifying word utterly fails you. In the second place I would ask, if God sent his Son into the world to suffer and die merely to make it *possible* for all men to be saved? But you must not forget that the heathen world for four thousand years had already died in their sins; and if Methodism is true, it was utterly impossible for a soul of them to be saved! Besides, would it not be well for a christian teacher to reflect whether he honors his Master by representing him as coming to this world with no *certainty* that the objects of his mission would be attained in a solitary individual? Prophecy had long foretold that he should see of the travail of his soul and should be satisfied, and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand.

In 1 Tim. iv. 10, you find another proof text of Universalism: "Who is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe." This text, you say, speaks of a *general* and *special* salvation; and you ask, 1. From what does Jesus Christ save all men? 2. From what does he save them that believe?

Let us now prepare to dive into the bottomless pit of metaphysics. "Jesus Christ," says the pastor of the Willet-st. church, "has saved all men from non-existence! As all men sinned *seminally* and not *actually*, in Adam, so all men, if Christ had not interposed to save them, would have been punished *seminally* as they sinned; that is, Adam and Eve would

have been cut off in their sins, and, of course, their posterity would never have existed." Oh, for the mantle of Duns Scotus, "the most subtle doctor!" But alas! this kind of sin and punishment is beyond the grasp of my feeble powers. Will you refer me to the Scriptures where it is taught? Stay a moment, however, and let us contemplate the magnitude of this salvation. The grace manifested in saving a being from non-existence to run the risk of living out an eternity in ceaseless and unspeakable torments, is, I must confess, rather questionable. I leave you and your friends to admire it, and particularly as you think that God sent his Son into the world merely to make it *possible* for men to escape endless misery! Again; "Jesus Christ saves all men from the guilt and punishment of original sin. None are now condemned, none are punished for Adam's sin. Rom. v." I have read this chapter with due care, but find no evidence that Christ came to save men from original, more than from actual sin. Perhaps if you will re-peruse what the apostle there says, you will see that he teaches very clearly the salvation of all mankind. Again; "He saves all men from total *deprivation* of divine influence." But is this true according to your theology? Is the savage, who is profoundly ignorant of God and his truth, saved from this deprivation? Once more; "Christ saves all men from total despair. He has placed man once more on the eligible ground of probation and made us 'prisoners of hope.'" Is this true? Let us consult the records of revivals so called, and see whether Christ saves all men from total despair. You know the contrary. So much for the *general* salvation. Now comes the *special*; which consists in salvation, "1. From the love of sin. 2. The guilt of sin. 3. The power of sin. 4. Pollution of sin. 5. From the consequences of sin."

It seems not to have occurred to you that it was God and not Christ of whom the apostle was here speaking. "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe." Perhaps this circumstance would modify your interpretation. Dr. Bloomfield paraphrases the passage

thus—"We undergo the toils [we do in spreading the gospel,] and the reproaches and persecutions we have to bear from its enemies, because we hope and trust in the promises of God, who is the temporal Preserver of all men; as well as the Savior of mankind in general, whether Jews or Gentiles." The truth is, God is the Savior of all men in Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all and tasted death for every man. He is the Savior specially of them that believe, inasmuch as they are made immediately the participants of his grace.

You refer to Rom. xi. 26. I was not before aware that this is one of the most prominent proof texts of Universalism. I pass therefore to 1 Tim. ii. 4. "Who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." The manner in which you dispose of this passage is curious. Universalists say "that to come unto the knowledge of the truth all must believe in Universalism? But do all men believe in Universalism? No, certainly not: for the author of these lectures does not." And multitudes besides, infidels and heathen, almost without number. "Has God lied? This blasphemous conclusion must follow if the Universalist's construction of this text be admitted." Very clever. But pray where is the blasphemy save in our limitarian friend's infidelity? God, says the apostle, will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. Is that true, Mr. Remington, or is it not? If it is true, then Universalism is true, or the Deity will be eternally disappointed. You may take your choice of these consequences.

I shall pass the text you quote from Rev. v. 13, because I do not profess to understand that book. It will answer, however, for the complete counterpart of all those passages which are so constantly adduced from the Revelation to prove endless misery. Even Mr. Wesley's dreamy exposition will not save a reasonable man from such a conclusion.

Thus ends your examination of the prominent texts of Universalism, and I trust none of the pillars of our faith are moved out of their place. You might, by patient study, have discovered a few more, but with your tact at exposition they would have been easily explained away. You close this part

of your lecture by instructing us "that certain classes of mankind are positively denied admittance into heaven or the gift of eternal life." In Gal. v. 19—21, you say, the works of the flesh are enumerated under sixteen different heads; and it is added that they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. In 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, you find a similar catalogue, of whom the same thing is asserted. Now it would be well for you to state explicitly what you understand these passages to teach. If they inculcate the doctrine that "the unrighteous, fornicators, adulterers," &c. &c. are placed beyond all reach of mercy, let it be so understood, and let your Methodist friends cease to mock the miseries of the world by inviting persons guilty of such crimes to repentance and salvation. But then, you know, and every body knows, that this is not the doctrine of the Bible. Again, if these declarations mean that all persons dying with such characters are to be everlastingly excluded from heaven, let this interpretation be proved. Yet you know this is impossible. The Scriptures give no warrant for such an opinion. The plain meaning of all such passages is this; that the kingdom of God, whether it be understood of Christ's kingdom on earth, or of heaven itself, is a kingdom of purity and truth, in which the wicked can enjoy no part from their total unfitness for participating in its spiritual happiness. Now it is the grand design of the gospel to prepare sinners for the possession of this inheritance. In 1 Cor. vi. 11, after affirming that "neither fornicators nor idolators, nor adulterers, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God," the apostle adds, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, etc. in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

The real matter of dispute between Universalists and Limitarians is not whether sinners, i. e. with the dispositions and characters of sinners, shall be admitted into heaven, or be blessed with the enjoyment of eternal life; this Universalists believe no more than any other class of Christians; but the question is, whether sinners shall remain sinners endlessly, and thus be endlessly excluded from the felicity of the spiritual world. On this point we are divided. You

contend that some men will be wicked throughout eternity, the enemies of God, and the sufferers of his wrath. I, on the contrary, believe that Christ must reign till he hath subdued all moral creatures to his sway, till he hath finished sin and brought in everlasting righteousness, and prepared a ransomed universe for the full participation of the pleasures which flow at God's right hand for evermore. That men are now unbelieving and rebellious, is no proof that they will remain so endlessly; for Christ came to save them from their sins and bring them to a knowledge of the truth. Of course, all the facts to which you here appeal, have no bearing on the subject. That sinners cannot go to heaven in their sins, that they cannot be saved without repentance and reformation, that the gospel opens the only hope of life and immortality, is all true; and that all men shall ultimately be redeemed and sanctified and gathered together in Christ Jesus is equally true; and God shall be all in all.

I have now gone over the argumentative part of your lectures. Hereafter I shall pay some attention to the objections to Universalism with which you close your labors. In the mean time I am

As ever yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XIX.

Dear Sir—I now come to your “leading objections to Universalism,” with which it seemed good to you to conclude your lectures. These objections were reserved, no doubt, for the purpose of producing effect, and leaving a mighty impression upon your hearers and readers. As they add nothing to the weight of argument, however, I might be excused from the task of examining them, did not the tone and spirit exhibited in them, demand a public reproof. Grossly ignorant of all the facts necessary to form an unbiased judgment, and utterly reckless of truth, you have gone on from objection to objection, pouring out your abuse without mercy, upon the poor Universalist, and at the same time in a manner that says, plainer than words can speak, Thank God, I am not like other men.

I intend to deal mildly with you, however, though it may be necessary for me to utter some unpalatable truths.

Your first objection to Universalism is, that “it destroys man’s moral agency, and, by consequence, makes the holy, just and good God, the author of all the sin and misery in the world. This we have proved in the first lecture.”

I have looked over your first lecture with great care, for the proof of this assertion, and must confess that my search has been in vain. It is true you quote Dr. Fisk, who says that “Universalism is founded upon predestination;”—that Universalists generally are fatalists, and that “those who are not, are evidently ignorant of their system.” And this is all the proof which the erudite pastor of the Willet street church adduces in support of the gross and graceless assertion that Universalism destroys man’s moral agency, and makes God the author of all the sin in the world! Not a solitary quotation is made from any Universalist author, high or low, known or unknown, and your utter neglect of such authorities shows

that all your little knowledge of Universalism was derived exclusively from your brethren in the Methodist ministry. The argument is purely a Methodist one, and with Methodists will no doubt have its weight; but to those who know or who trouble themselves to think on the subject, it must appear as it really is, a specimen of sheer assertion and wholesale abuse.

Your second objection, is, if possible, still more strange. Universalism, you say, "sets aside the atonement of Jesus Christ altogether, and makes man suffer the full punishment of his crimes, in this world. Hence, if men enter the kingdom of heaven, it must be without Christ or his salvation, and the song of the redeemed be rendered null and void forever. This we have proved in the second lecture."

That Universalism sets aside the atonement of Christ is utterly false. But the assertion that it does so, probably originated in the Rev. Mr. Remington's utter ignorance of what Christ's atonement is. You think that Christ came to save men from the *punishment* of their sins—a doctrine which is contradicted in plain terms, on almost every page of the Bible. Universalists believe that the object of his mission was to save men from their *sins*, and hence, from deserving punishment. Atonement is *reconciliation*, and the Scriptures assert, what the Universalist believes and rejoices in, that "God was in Christ, *reconciling* the world to himself." If, therefore, men ever enter the kingdom of heaven, it must be by Christ and his salvation, and the song of the Redeemer will they sing forever.

I would affectionately recommend you to review your second lecture, and observe, as you can hardly fail of doing, how utterly futile are all your attempts to free the sinner from the just punishment of his sins. "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." Hath God said and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken and shall he not make it good? The Lord renders to every man according to his works. Beware, then, I beseech you, lest you fritter away the *truth* as you attempt to escape the *justice* of God.

Still more marvellous is your third objection. You say, "Universalism represents the Almighty as a cruel, tyrannical being ; inflicting punishment upon the innocent for the sins of the guilty ; and *unjust* in punishing the innocent, and letting the guilty pass unpunished. This we have also proved in the second lecture."

"Of whom speaketh the prophet this ? of himself or some other man ?" Surely, Mr. Remington cannot be ignorant that this objection is against his own creed, and not Universalism. Universalism represent the Almighty cruel, and tyrannical, and unjust ? How, dear brother ? "By inflicting punishment upon the innocent for the sins of the guilty, and letting the guilty pass unpunished." Indeed, is this to make the Almighty cruel, tyrannical, and unjust ? If so, will you point me to a more cruel, tyrannical, and unjust transaction than that by which you atonement was wrought out ? There, if there is truth in your creed, *punishment was inflicted upon the innocent for the sins of the guilty, and the guilty made to go unpunished.* This is the glory of man-made orthodoxy, if any glory it has : and it was only in the preceding paragraph, that you urged it as an objection to Universalism, that it sets aside a doctrine which you now tell us represents God as a *cruel, tyrannical, and unjust* being !

But once more : In the preceding objection you complain of Universalism, because it "makes man suffer the full punishment of his crimes in this world ;" and here that it lets "the guilty pass unpunished." Both of these objections, it seems to me, cannot be valid ; and it would gratify me to have some explanation. I have re-perused your second lecture, where you have "proved" your third objection to Universalism ; but I find nothing which convicts it of making God a cruel, tyrannical being, inflicting punishment upon the innocent for the sins of the guilty, and letting the guilty go free. I suspect, however, that all this is proved in this short-hand method. 1. Universalism teaches that natural death is the penalty of the divine law. This was made out only by a scandalous misrepresentation of a paragraph from my sermon. 2. Infants die. 3 Consequence. Thus Universalism repre-

sents God as punishing the innocent (infants) for the sins of the guilty, (their parents, or perhaps Adam.) But I will not attempt to be your expositor.

The fourth objection against Universalism, consists in its making "no just distinction between the righteous and the wicked. It ranks the children of God and the children of the wicked one in the same class, and makes them fellow-heirs of the same promises and the same heaven. Its prayer is, 'gather thou my soul with sinners, and my life with bloody men.'"

This is a sensible objection, and there are several passages in the Scriptures by which you might have illustrated and "proved" it. Let me quote one or two. "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men." "Stand by thyself, come not near me, for I am holier than thou." Is it such a distinction as this, that Mr. Remington would have kept up? There are examples enough of it in the New Testament. Even the Son of God was rejected by a perverse and wicked generation, because he trampled on the distinctions which self-righteous Pharisees had established. He was denounced as a "friend of publicans and sinners," and nailed to the cross by these lovers of a "just distinction between the righteous and the wicked." He came to *save* the world, and to save it from *sin*. He had but one gospel to preach, and one salvation to work out. He died alike for "the children of God, (if there were any such,) and the children of the wicked one;" and he died in manifestation of the love of God to the WORLD at large, to every creature.

Perhaps, however, you mean something else. Perhaps you mean that Universalism ranks all men in the same class, as though it were saying, "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them." That such is your meaning, I am led to infer from the prayer which you ascribe to it. If that is the spirit of your objection, I have only to say, that it is utterly false, a base calumny; and you know it to be so, or know nothing on the subject. But freely do I forgive such an ebullition of malice. I might refer to some instructive passages in the history of a certain denomi-

nation in which the children of the wicked one, high handed sinners and "bloody men," have been regarded not merely as prospective fellow-heirs of heaven, but received here to the fellowship of the saints, and made the teachers of the church of God! but I forbear.

In the fifth place, you tell us, "Universalism does no good. It brings no sinners to repentance. It produces no revivals of religion. In short, it never was the means of saving one sinner from his sins; therefore it is not from God. If it were, he would own and bless it. But he does not, he never did, and never will own it as his truth. He never will bless it in the conversion and salvation of sinners. It is from beneath, not from above."

This, it must be confessed, is taking broad ground, and using quite positive language. And the man who can speak thus, must be either very familiar with a somewhat extensive history of Universalism, or else very intimate with all the principles of human nature. As to your knowledge of Universalism—of its general doctrines; to say nothing of its history and its moral effects—your lectures themselves, cry out on every page, in tones that cannot be suppressed, "My leanness, my leanness." But how then are you qualified to assert that "Universalism does no good?" In the first place you do not know what it *is*: How then can you tell what it *does*, or does not *do*?

But "Universalism produces no revivals of religion!" Pray sir, what is a revival of religion? And how long have they been fashionable in the world? Has the Church of England, the mother, and the Roman Catholic Church, the grandmother of Methodism, any revivals? Has the Greek Church, the Lutheran Church, the Presbyterian Church any revivals, in the modern sense of that term? And yet a system of faith, or a religion, that produces none of those spasmodic whirlwinds, must be denounced as "not of God!" But Universalism "brings no sinners to repentance." That is an assertion of your own making, and requires proof which neither you nor any other mortal can produce. And so of the charitable remark, that "it is from beneath, not from above," A plain,

common sense man, would be apt to suspect the opposite of Universalism to have originated in a lower world. But I pass to your sixth objection.

"Universalism does immense evil. It grieves the righteous and strengthens the hands of the wicked. Ezek. xiii. 22, 23. It cries *peace, peace*, when God has not spoken peace. It builds up the sinner in his sins, and often makes him at least, two-fold more the child of hell than he was before! As long as sinners cleave to universalism, so long will they cleave to their sins." This objection is supported by the clear testimony of Dr. Fisk, who represents it as saying to the wicked, "Heaven shall be yours, fear not. In the midst of all your blasphemies, and all your uncleanness, and all your excesses; yea, in your extortions, your robberies, your murders, rejoice and be exceeding glad, for heaven, with all its weight of glory, is yours." The moral sense which could permit so gross and malicious a misrepresentation of all the teachings of Universalism, deserves any thing rather than envy.

I know not how you would preach Universalism in your present state of mind, but if God should ever give you grace to believe it, I know you could not preach, as you now misrepresent it.

It is a little singular, that with all the acuteness frequently exhibited by the opposers of Universalism, they have not hitherto perceived what the tendency of such objections as this and the preceding really is. "Universalism does no good but immense evil. It brings no sinners to repentance, but encourages them in their sins. It produces no revivals of religion." Such, it is said, are the facts. But there is a great deal of religion in the world, many revivals are produced, and multitudes of sinners are brought to repentance. What accomplishes all this? It is not Universalism; and we are left to infer in no doubtful manner, that it is the antagonist dogma of endless misery. "As long as sinners cleave to Universalism, so long will they cleave to their sins. The important doctrines of repentance, faith and holiness, preached to them, will be labor lost as long as they remain established Univer-

salists." Are we at any loss, then, what peculiar dogma it is that alone can give efficacy to these important doctrines? Do we need to be told in plainer language that the doctrine of *endless misery* is thus represented as the main spring of religion? Deny that single doctrine to christianity, and it produces no more revivals, brings no more sinners to repentance, no longer fosters a spirit of love and holiness; but it becomes henceforth a grief to the righteous, and a strengthener of the hands of the wicked!

Believers in endless misery, are these things so? Weigh well the consequences and answer me. Is it true that all your revivals owe their existence to the fear of hell-fire? Does all the repentance in the land spring from the same exalted motive? Is your faith, your holiness, your love to God and love to man; are all your prayers and thanksgivings, your piety and christian labors, the fruits of the doctrine of endless misery? In short, is this dogma the moving principle and the glory of the christian religion? If so, let it be proclaimed upon the house-tops. Let the world be disabused of the notion, that christians are virtuous and good, because the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts. Let it be understood that the grace of Christ is powerless to work salvation. Let the ministers of Christ blush not to say, that were it not for the devil, and his dungeons and racks, they would mock at all the agonies of the cross, and laugh God himself to scorn! Let them give the lie to the apostle, who affirms, that "we love God because he first loved us;" and let them teach that holiness and heaven derive all their charms from the fires and torments of hell!

Thank God, it is not so. Men in their madness of opposition to Universalism, do, it is true, virtually say all this; but "they know not what they do." Little do they dream what a terrible recoil this stroke, which they aim at the truth of God, is to have upon their own heads. Little do they think that this argument, with which they fondly hope to annihilate Universalism, must, if successful, strip themselves of every vestige of virtue, but that most doubtful of all virtues, the fear of hell.

Will my friend Remington think of these things, and reflect whether it is a love of truth or of victory that prompts him to employ objections so fatal to every thing pure and lovely and of good report.

As ever, yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XX.

Dear Sir—The seventh objection with which you favor us is that “Universalism is unscriptural;”—an objection much more easily made than proved. You denounce it, however, as unscriptural, and *plausible* only as it is successful in *perverting* the word of God. To make this manifest to your readers, you adopt a somewhat thread-bare, but at the same time, a marvellously short-hand method. You select ten or twelve of the popular proof texts of your favorite dogma which you arrange in a column under the title of *The Holy Scriptures*. In another column you present us with the same passages as you, and those from whom you copied, think “they should stand in *The Creed of the Universalists*. Under this latter head, Mark xvi. 16, reads thus: “He that believeth not shall be *saved*.” John iii. 35: “He that believeth not the Son *shall see life*, and the wrath of God *shall not abide* on him.” 2 Thess. i. 9: “The wicked *shall not be punished*, but *rewarded* with everlasting happiness.” *Hades* in Luke xvi. 23, is rendered *graves* instead of *hell*, and so also is *Gehenna*, Matt. x. 28; xliii. 15, 33.

Really, friend Remington, this is but a shallow business, not very honorable either to your heart or your head. In the first place, you know, or you ought to know, that from the beginning to the end, this is a graceless and inexcusable misrepresentation of Universalism, exhibiting a pitiable ignorance of its character and expositions of the Bible, or else a mean attempt to impose upon the public credulity. You assume that these several passages mean precisely what the unlearned

and unthinking have been taught and suppose them to mean. You take it for granted that the word *saved*, for instance, means to be rescued from endless misery, and that *hell* uniformly signifies the place of such punishment. Hence you conclude that Universalism is guilty of "palpable perversions of the word of God." All this, however, is utterly destitute of proof, and whether you are aware of the fact or not, men who are well qualified to produce it, are singularly indisposed to make the attempt. I do not make this remark to your disparagement; though I may be allowed to hint that had you and your advisers known more on the subject, the Willet-st. lectures would never have appeared in print.

The remark introduced in this connexion that you would not preach Universalism if you believed it, unless first convinced of the infallibility of your own judgment, is deserving a slight notice; not merely because you make this declamation, but because I am led to think it quite common in your denomination. The late Dr. Fisk once expressed the same sentiment. Perhaps, however, the import of such a remark was not fully comprehended by either you or him. If a man would not preach Universalism if he believed it, should we not be justified in suspecting that he might preach Methodism or something else, even if he did not believe it? Besides, how shall we know that such a one does not now believe Universalism? True, he denies it, but that is to be expected, for he openly avows that he would not preach, and of course would not confess, even if he believed it! Whether this is christian conscientiousness or accursed hypotrisy, you and your friends may decide; but for myself, I pray God I may ever have the honesty to *preach* what I *believe*. I had rather err with a good conscience, than to hold the truth in unrighteousness.

The ironical commendation which you here tender Universalists for their want of missionary zeal, is peculiarly unfortunate. You acknowledge that we are diligent in the dissemination of our faith, while we are perpetually opposed by all the self-styled orthodox denominations in the land. We are not idle, therefore, though we "do not send out missionaries to

Africa and other unhealthy climes." If we are doing nothing among the heathen abroad, we are exploding some heathen errors at home. But how long, allow me to ask, has the great Methodist denomination been "animated with a very active spirit of missionary zeal"? How many missionaries do they now support in foreign countries? What good are those missionaries doing? Still farther, what are you doing at home? Is your denomination increasing in numbers and knowledge and virtue? On the contrary, is it not, with all its missionary zeal, and all "the saving influence" of the dogma of endless misery, at a stand-still, and obviously taking on the aspect of internal discord, decay and ruin?

Your eighth objection is derived from the not very obvious, but still assumed fact, that "the apostles and primitive ministers of the gospel cannot have believed in Universalism." This is proved by asking whether any one can suppose that they would have submitted to so many privations, hardships and sufferings in such a cause; whether the people would have persecuted them for preaching such a doctrine; and finally, whether their preaching could have produced such wonderful effects if it had embraced Universalism. Let us glance at these questions separately.

1. "Can any one believe that the apostles would have submitted to nakedness, cold, hunger, thirst, disgrace, poverty, bonds, imprisonments and martyrdom, for preaching Universalism?" The question clearly involves an absurdity in the view of my friend, Mr. Remington; and no wonder; for a professed minister of the gospel, who can unblushingly avow that he would not preach Universalism if he believed it, must of necessity think it impossible for the apostles to submit to any inconvenience, the slightest even, in its promulgation! You seem to think that the only thing which can urge a man to preach any truth whatever, is the fear of hell-fire. This is the only motive whose power you are willing to acknowledge. Still you might reflect that God has constituted and endowed some mortals so strangely that they are actually capable of making sacrifices for the happiness of their fellow creatures without being driven to it by the terrors of endless damna-

tion! And I cannot but think that Paul and the other apostles were individuals of that number. "The love of Christ," said he, "constraineth us;"—"for therefore we both labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God, *who is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe.*" He exhorted his brethren to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame. In short, I remember no passage where any inspired writer intimates that the apostles or primitive ministers of the gospel were actuated by a belief in the dogma of endless misery. On the contrary, it was the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, the love of Christ constraining them, the love of their fellow men urging them on: they spoke as if they were the partakers of a new and higher life, of a deep and fervent charity which embraced a world, and which taught them not to seek their own good exclusively, but to go out preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to every creature. They had learned that their home was in heaven, and of course they did not count their life dear to them so that they might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received to testify of the grace of God.

Reflect for one moment how you rob the apostles of their honor, and disgrace your own character, by contending against the Universalist, that love to God and love to man, deep and pure and divine, is not sufficient to furnish a motive for all the labors which even they performed and all the sacrifices they made.

2. "Can any one believe that the people would have inflicted these punishments or sufferings on the apostles for preaching the glad tidings that all should surely be admitted into the kingdom of heaven?" Here is another marvel to the eye of the pastor of the Willet street church. Perhaps I can explain it. People are not generally much offended at the preaching which assures them of their *individual* salvation; but there is in every age a large class of men whose rage and hate can be excited by nothing so readily as by preaching that God is the Father and that Christ is the Savior of all other

men as well as themselves! The Scribes and Pharisees of our Lord's day afford a striking illustration of this fact. Had Christ preached that they were God's favorites, and his only beloved, and that He would damn the whole world beside, think you he would have been crowned with thorns and nailed to the cross? No; he would have been hailed by them as the Sent of God! But alas! Jesus of Nazareth wrought miracles for the poor, and the poor had the gospel preached to them; he ate with publicans and sinners, and showed himself to be their friend. He taught that God is kind to the unthankful and to the evil; and the result was such as might have been expected; these pious and praying souls, who trusted that they were righteous and despised others, persecuted the Savior from village to village, and from city to city, and rested not till they crucified him between two thieves!

As it was then, so is it now. We are not wanting men of the same temper and spirit in this age and this country, as were engaged in the persecutions of Christ and his apostles. True, you tell us, "the most devoted men of God received the apostles with open arms, and gave every demonstration that was possible of their love and attachment. But the wicked hated them and did all they could to injure them and prevent their spreading the doctrines of the gospel." But pray, who were these "wicked?" Were they not the most religious people, the piously orthodox of that day? And these "devoted men of God," who received the apostles with open arms, were the heretics, the off-scouring of the earth, the despised and down-trodden of their age. And how is it now? Do not those who assume much of the religion of the land, the pious and praying people, (I mean such as have piety and prayers to boast of,) oppose and persecute Universalists, and for the same reasons that the Pharisees of old persecuted the disciples of Christ? Who are they that wish to deprive Universalists of the name of christians, and even of the privileges of citizenship? Are they "the wicked," or are they "the most devoted christians"? Who hears any objections to a man or a sect that believes that only a very few will be saved?—Preach partialism and you preach to please the corrupt heart.

Preach that God loves only the righteous, and you please all who trust that they are righteous. Preach that God will torment the wicked forever, and you gratify every malignant spirit on earth. But preach Universalism and all such as seek an exclusive heaven are presently offended, and the preacher is denounced as a friend of publicans and sinners !

3. "Can any one believe that under the preaching of these glad tidings some should 'tremble;' others, 'pricked to the heart,' cry out, Men and brethren, what must we do? and others fall prostrate at their feet, and say, Sirs, what must we do to be saved?" In reply, I ask Mr. Remington if he is prepared to prove that Felix *trembled*, or the Jews cried out, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" or the jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" from the preaching of the doctrine of "the future and endless punishment of the wicked?" I know you are not; and you know that neither in the preaching of Peter or of Paul, on the occasions alluded to, or indeed on any other occasion, is there the least intimation of the doctrine in question! You look in vain into the Scriptures for any instances of the modern kind of self-styled evangelical or orthodox preaching. Paul reasoned before Felix, "of righteousness and temperance and a judgment to come," or about to come, and Felix trembled, i. e. was afraid; not, says Dr. Bloomfield, with a *trembling terror*, nor merely with an *uneasy feeling*, but he was in fear. "The thing," says Bishop Sanderson, quoted by Bloomfield with approbation, "that made Felix tremble, was that Paul's discourse fell upon those special vices, wherein he was notably faulty, and were then clapped in close upon him." Peter, on the day of Pentecost, preached before the multitude in Jerusalem. "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly," said he, "that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" But nothing was said of endless misery. And in the case of the poor jailer, stupidity itself cannot set up such a pretension. It was introduced here merely for effect, for my Reverend friend cannot

be so ignorant as not to know that there is some difference between an earthquake and the preaching of endless torments !

The conclusion to which you come seems to be, that if Universalism is true, the apostles were fools for suffering in its promulgation—that the people acted very strangely in persecuting those who preached these glad tidings, and that there is no accounting for any expressions of penitence or sorrow or anxiety in those who heard the gospel ! It is astonishing to you that a corrupt and licentious Felix should have trembled under the apostle's reasoning ; that the Jews, the very men who were instrumental in nailing their Messiah Lord to the cross, should have been pricked to the heart and said, What must we do ? and that a jailer awaked out of his sleep by an earthquake that shook the prison-house to its very foundations, should have cried out, What must I do to be saved ? If Universalism be true, how are all these marvels to be explained. Poor man ; is there nothing in the universe of God that can help us to account for these things but the dogma of endless misery ? Powerful, I am willing to acknowledge that dogma is, but worthless would the gospel be if it must rely on that glaring absurdity for its spirit and efficacy. It would no longer be "the power of God unto salvation." Well was it said by the apostle, "God hath not given us *the spirit of fear*, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

With respect, yours, &c.

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XX.

Dear Sir—Your ninth objection to Universalism lies in the assumed fact that “it encourages sin.” To make out this very questionable assertion, you introduce another, still more startling, viz: that “if Universalism be true, the more sin the better, because thereby our admittance into heaven will be hastened.” The way in which all this is “proved” is curious, and the conclusion overwhelming. In the first place, you say that Universalists must admit that the wicked antediluvians and the Sodomites, Judas Iscariot, &c. entered heaven long before righteous Noah, Lot, and the apostles. The wicked, because of their wickedness, rested in heaven, while the righteous, because they were righteous, were left many years longer in this world of sin and suffering. “What an encouragement,” you exclaim, “to sin! Only sin to such an extent as to provoke the Almighty to cut you off by death, and then he will take you immediately to heaven; or if this course does not suit you, you have a still shorter way of getting there; you can take your choice, the rope, the razor, the pistol, the river, or the poisonous drug. By either of these you can end all your sufferings, and be in heaven in a few moments whenever you may choose. And if this were true, how could it be wrong for you to do so?”

Unfortunately for this beautiful philosophy, mankind has always been so ignorant and perverse as to regard a violent and premature death inflicted for crime, a *punishment*. Legislators, and even the Almighty, have countenanced and encouraged such an opinion; and the consequence is that most men, even Methodists themselves, are not very anxious to be hung, even though they might thereby hasten their entrance into heaven. It is now but a few years since a Methodist minister was tried for his life, and you are not ignorant of the great efforts made, and the large sums of money expended, to save him from such a mercy! It is now generally believed

that public justice was, in that case, foiled by the influence and wealth of a great religious sect; and I remember no single circumstance which could lead any one to conclude that either the accused or his brethren at large were particularly anxious that he should swing from the gallows to heaven! Was it because they believed him guilty? or did they fear that his title to the better world was too questionable to risk the consequences? Cases are not wanting, I presume, in every religious sect, and among those of no sect, in which men are prompted to sin; but there never was perhaps a single instance of an individual's sinning for the purpose of hastening his admittance into heaven. Your objection, therefore, though very acute, is utterly groundless.

But I have not yet done. You think that if Universalists do not like to provoke the Almighty to cut them off by death, they ought at least to commit suicide; and you are kind enough to prescribe several methods by which this can be very expeditiously done.

Now if this objection is valid against Universalists, it is obvious that were it not for your faith in endless misery, you would at once seek some means of speedily reaching heaven. The only consideration that keeps you from suicide is the fear of the endless torments of hell. Only banish this apprehension, and you remain no longer "in this world of sin and suffering." Let us examine this doctrine a little. In the first place, you acknowledge yourself a slave, living in fear, and of course, destitute of love. In the second place, you virtually accuse God of so forming and conditioning man that life in this world is a curse; or at least that he is not infinitely wise and good in continuing him here! I do not envy the spirit that dictates such sentiments. It is not christianity;—it is not the spirit of child-like love and gratitude and confidence toward God that the christian must feel. Pardon me for speaking freely, but sir, if these are your real sentiments, let me tell you, what your own conscience must have told you long ago, your pretensions to christianity are utterly false. What, you profess to be a disciple of Christ and to preach the gospel, and yet avow that were it not for the fear of hell, you

would either perpetrate some capital crime, or else commit suicide! May God in his infinite mercy deliver his church from such teachers.

I believe in the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. I have no fears of endless misery, either for myself or one of the human race. Such a result I hold to be absolutely impossible in the government of Almighty God. It is not enough to say that it is untrue; it is absurd and blasphemous! And yet I was never tempted to commit suicide. Before I knew God and his Son Jesus Christ, the instinctive love of life which I held in common with the rest of mankind, preserved me from such a danger; and since God saw fit to bless me with the participation of his grace, there have been other and mightier influences operating for my safety. I love God and would honor and obey him. I know that he is my Father, and that he loves me better than any human parent ever loved. I know, too, that he is most intimately acquainted with all my circumstances and wants, and with all that is best for me. He knows what blessings I need, and what trials and sufferings will contribute to my improvement. I am in his hands, and at his disposal for time and for eternity; and such confidence do I feel in his wisdom and goodness, that I would not for worlds, even were it possible, break myself away from his control; for I know that now all things shall work together for good. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad." Truly, can I say with the psalmist—"Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." I look forward to heaven with hope and joy. I know that my inheritance is there, and I anticipate its future possession; but still I am willing to run with patience the race that is set before me.

You will perceive there is some difference between us. I would not commit suicide, because I love God, and confide in his infinite wisdom; you would commit suicide were it not for the fear of endless misery! Let us represent our respective denominations, and you will see the difference between Universalist and orthodox piety! There is an equal difference in

the results. For it is a notorious fact that more suicides have been *caused* by the dogma of endless misery, in the United States alone, and within the last ten years, than were ever committed by professed Universalists in the world! The truth is, every man who believes that dogma for himself, will be driven to insanity, if not to suicide: and the only reason why orthodox churches are not converted into mad-houses, is because the advocates and supporters of the doctrine are good natured enough to believe it for their neighbors and not for themselves.

But still "Universalism encourages men to sin!" And who is it that makes this graceless charge? A Methodist clergyman—a member of a denomination whose moral character was never very remarkable for its purity, and which has, at this moment, I believe, more *ministers* in the several prisons of the State of New York than can be found of Universalists of all ranks and classes in all the prisons of the U. States!!

Let me not be thought too severe. I make these remarks with no feelings of unkindness. I would have you remember, however, that he who volunteers as a public defamer of other denominations, should first be assured that his own is not peculiarly liable to reproach.

Am I still told that Universalism does theoretically justify murder and suicide? This is what the lectures before me more than intimate. But will you condescend to reflect for one moment on your own creed. Never was there a system of faith, that under certain circumstances, more effectually canonized murder! You yourself tell us that "All who die in infancy, will obtain the gift of eternal life through the merits of Jesus Christ. Such not being moral agents are saved unconditionally." Now it need not be said that your system recognizes these infants as being so constituted that the moment they become moral agents they will also become *sinners*, and of course, justly exposed to the penalty of eternal death; and that the risk which moral agents incur of losing their souls forever, is awful in the extreme. What then is the obvious duty of parents? If they must and will be the means of bringing children into existence, are they not bound

by every consideration, as they love them and desire their happiness, or hope to meet them in heaven, to see well to it that their offspring never pass the boundary line that separates infancy from moral accountability? Shall they weakly or wickedly risk their child's everlasting felicity, when it is completely in their power to send it in a moment to heaven? The parent who could knowingly subject his child to such an awful responsibility and hazard, would himself merit damnation!

Perhaps it will be replied that the parent would, by taking the life of his child, expose himself to endless torments. But if Methodism be true, this danger is trifling; first, because we are all exposed a thousand-fold to such torments already, and an additional crime, though of blood, cannot sensibly affect the awful account; and secondly, because we should enjoy the same opportunities to escape all punishment that we do now. But if it should finally happen that an individual were damned everlastingly for such an act, he might still enjoy the consciousness of suffering in the cause of humanity, and feel and know that the very crime which weighed him down to hell, had been the cause of raising a beloved child or family to heaven! But enough. Let us hear no more that Universalism encourages men to sin; at least, till you have examined "the odds and ends" of your own wretched system of faith; or till a happier illustration of its moral power has been exhibited than the world has yet seen.

I now pass to your tenth objection, which is, that "Universalism is opposed to experimental religion. It derides the tears of the penitent sinner, and the experience of the genuine believer." Did I suppose that the pastor of the Willet street church himself believed this assertion, I would challenge him to the proof. I would ask him how and where Universalism has been or is opposed to experimental religion, and when it has derided the tears of the penitent sinner and the experience of the genuine believer? But, sir, you know better than this. Ignorant as you are of our faith, and of its practical effects, you know that you have no reason for such an assertion. It was made for effect. Like most of your objections, it sprung from the malignity of your own heart, and an invete-

rate hatred towards Universalists. Hence it is that in the same strain of false accusation, you go on to say, that "Universalism makes religion to exist altogether in the head and not at all in the heart. *Believe in Universalism*—this is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of their religion. As a people they know nothing of experimental godliness."

Heartily do I pity the man who can indulge in such language as this, and particularly in reference to a denomination of which he is obviously ignorant. But pray, sir, what do you mean by experimental religion and godliness? Is there none of it in the world except among Methodists? Does it consist in hysterical sobbing and crying and screaming, in shouting and clapping of hands? If not, it is possible there is as much of it among Universalists as among your own sect. For there is an experimental religion, Mr. Remington, that is too deep to be clamorous, too pure to attempt the gaining of public attention by mere outside show and pretension, and too permanent to waste itself in the senseless effervescence of an hour or an evening, and leave the heart cold and lifeless for the remainder of the week. Would to God there were more of this in our land! Our Sunday religion might not crackle and blaze so much perhaps as it does at present, but the fire upon the altar of the heart would burn clear and steadily through the whole week, and through life. Believe me, sir, he is a very curse to the church and a disgrace to his profession, who performs all his religion in one day, and leaves six for the service of the world and the devil! Look around you, sir, and soberly ask where you see more christians of that class than among yourselves.

But Universalism insists on a belief in the final holiness and happiness of all men. "*Believe in Unipersalism*—this is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of their faith." Now this is not true. We think that a belief in our distinguishing doctrine is an essential part of perfect christian faith; but we by no means unchristianize a man because he does not believe it. A man may be a sincere disciple of Christ, and yet not understand and believe all his teachings. It required a vision to open the eyes of the apostle Peter, and make him know that the gospel was to be

preached to the Gentiles. Then he understood that God is no respecter of persons.

But how is it with yourself? Is not a faith in endless misery indispensable? This you assert in substance again and again. The spirit of your language is, *Believe in endless misery*—this is the *Alpha* and *Omega* of all true religion. You teach in no ambiguous terms, that were it not for this faith, you would serve the devil and take your fill of sin, and that whenever life grew tedious among the pleasures of transgression, you would cut yourself loose and launch into eternity! From such "experimental godliness," good Lord deliver us.

Your eleventh objection is much the same as the preceding, viz: "Universalism is opposed by genuine christians and opposed to them. If Universalism were true christianity, it would be held in fellowship by real christians. But it is not." There is great modesty as well as great force in this objection. You first deny that he can be a christian who believes in Universalism, and then prove most conclusively, that Universalism cannot be true because christians do not believe it! The argument would have appeared better in the lips of the Pope, in the beginning of the Reformation, than it does now from the pastor of the Wilket street church. Still, "in the essentials of religion," you tell us, "all christians agree. But Universalists do not generally, if at all, believe in the essentials of religion." Indeed! Perhaps I do not know what "the essentials of religion" are; but I do know what Universalists generally believe. They believe in one God, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things; in Jesus Christ, the "Son of God" and "Savior of the world;" in the resurrection of the dead; and in life and immortality. These doctrines, therefore, make no part of Mr. Remington's "essentials of religion!" Be it so; they do make a very important part of ours; and we envy no man his religion from which these doctrines are excluded, or in which they are not essential.

But you are armed with other proof that Universalism is not true christianity. "If they who believe it are true christians, why are they so ready to publish, and even to magnify

the faults of professing christians? Why do they turn their hands against the righteous, and with an air of triumph exult when Zion mourns over the backslidings of her people?"—These questions are full of power. They obviously come from the bottom of your heart. The meaning, however, is quite plain. Universalists cannot be christians because they expose the damnable hypocrisy and iniquities that are exhibited under the broad mantle of modern orthodoxy. They venture to say that murder is murder, and adultery is adultery, and falsehood, falsehood, even though committed by an orthodox minister. And in short, that the doctrine of endless misery is not so restraining, and holy, and purifying a doctrine as its advocates pretend! This is "the head and front" of our offence. You know, moreover, that the catalogue of crimes perpetrated by those standing high in your own sect, is not small; and hence your anxiety, since you cannot frighten us into silence, to denounce us as enemies of religion! You talk of our being ready to publish the faults of professing christians, and of our turning our hands against the righteous. If calling things by their right names, and speaking of men according to their true characters; if stripping the hypocrite of his garb, and teaching men to distinguish between *professing* christianity, and *practicing* its precepts, are tokens of enmity to religion, Universalists are, I think, liable to the charge; and so were our Savior and his apostles. Yet while we condemn the evil-doer, we pray, and pray in faith, that he may be saved from his sins.

As ever, yours,

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

LETTER XXII.

Dear Sir—Your twelfth objection is presented in these words—"Universalism often *fatally* deceives the ignorant." "They quote Scripture; this passes with the ignorant for argument. Are their quotations appropriate, and do they harmonize with the general tenure* of the Scriptures, are questions which the intelligent may ask, but the ignorant seldom think thus far. They take the simple fact for demonstration, instead of looking to the language and meaning of the passages thus quoted, and upon the strength of it live and die without religion, and lose their souls forever. How awfully responsible and dreadfully to be deprecated must be the condition of their teachers!"

Your intimate acquaintance with Universalism, both as it is preached, and as it is met with in books, gives great weight to this objection. Besides, there is an assumed superiority of intelligence among the believers in endless misery which comes with overwhelming power from the learned writer of the lectures before me. And no man within the sphere of my limited acquaintance, knows better how to quote Scripture, and have it pass among the ignorant for argument, than yourself. Your lectures furnish most satisfactory evidence of this.

But really, Mr. Remington, there is an effrontery in this objection that is intolerable. If you knew a tithe as much of the controversy between Universalists and their opposers for the last fifty years, as you ought to have known before you commenced your labors in this field, you would have been aware that however liable to this objection Universalists may be, their opposers are still ten-fold more so. What, indeed, have been most of the labors of the latter, but a continued repetition, and frequently without an attempt at scholar-like

* Perhaps the erudite author meant *tenor*.

exegesis, of the ordinary round of the proof-texts of that favorite dogma, endless misery? "The wicked shall be turned into hell"—"shall go away into everlasting punishment"—"except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," &c. &c., have been repeated again and again and again, till a tolerably well read Universalist is as familiar with all the passages of Scripture ever marshaled against him, as a school-boy is with his table of multiplication. We, on the contrary, have asked what do these passages teach? We have challenged our opposers to an examination of them. We have explained them ourselves, and in most cases, backed our interpretations by the concessions and expositions of learned and respectable orthodox commentators. We have called upon the advocates of endless misery to come forth and show, if they can, that our views of these passages are false: and what is the reply? If a champion of that doctrine heeds our summons, we are doomed to hear the same passages repeated once more, in the same way. Hammond and Whithy and Clarke and others, are treated with contempt, while the ignorant are left to believe that they cannot misunderstand language so plain as these proof-texts of ceaseless torments. It is thus final appeal is made, on a subject so important, to the *prejudices* of the unlearned, instead of meekly and patiently "looking to the language and meaning of the passages thus quoted."

I now come to your last objection; and as it is last, so is it the most absurd. "Universalism," you say, "often fails in the hour of danger and death. Its promises are not to be relied upon. They have often been broken. It is a treacherous system. I would not trust it for worlds," &c. &c. What you mean is rendered plain by the contrast which you afterwards exhibit between Universalism and "true religion," i. e. modern orthodoxy which "never fails." Now it is quite possible you meant to state the truth here, though I, confess I have some doubts. For in the first place, it is a most notorious fact, which impudence itself dare not deny, that orthodoxy does often and most egregiously fail its votaries when they come to die. It is a system replete with terrors. In all that is peculiar to it, I challenge the world to find a parti-

cle that can sustain any soul in life, or comfort and cheer it in the hour of death. In the second place, the instances in which Universalism fails its believers are exceedingly rare. Of those reported and believed in the orthodox world, not one in fifty is susceptible of any proof. Many of them are sheer falsehoods, set afloat for party purposes, by those who think it right to lie for the truth. A large share are the cases of orthodox hypocrites, who confessed that they never believed Universalism, but had been trying to do so; while a few instances, perhaps, have occurred where sincere Universalists, when enfeebled by disease and unsustained by the prayers and conversation of persons of kindred faith, have been left victims to the arts of such spiritual "comforters" as yourself, and driven to despair. During the last eight or ten years, it has been my fortune to see many Universalists on the sick and death bed, under almost every diversity of disease and of worldly circumstances; and never yet have I seen one whose faith failed him. On this subject I cannot be instructed by you or any other orthodox minister. What I have seen I have seen.

Universalism embraces every thing which belongs to orthodoxy that can in any degree support one in the hour of danger and of death. And it superadds to this, much that is peculiar to itself and full of comfort and good hope. It opens fountains of consolation to the dying and the mourner, of which the opposing creed does and can know nothing.

That many christians, who embrace the popular creed, live and die happily, is undoubtedly true; and devoutly ought we to thank God for it. But it is quite worthy of remark, that it is not the dogma of endless misery, or any thing connected with it, that enables them to do so. The great mass of christians of all sects, even of the strictest, are blessed with a most comfortable scepticism relative to the doctrine of endless misery. They think of it, and fear it, both for themselves, and their friends and neighbors, much less than a careless observer might suppose. Much is said about it in the pulpit, it is true. But how is it said, and how is it heard? You know full well; and others may if they will but observe. Occasionally a storm

is raised under the name of a revival of religion, and some are led to think that the preachers themselves are beginning to believe what they preach. There is a great show of zeal ; and mighty effects follow. After a time, the storm subsides : a few have been converted ; one or two probably sent to the Lunatic Asylum ; three-fourths of the converts backslide, and the rest are found no better than they were before ; the preachers resume their former tone, and talk of hell, and endless torments, with as much coolness as a farmer would speak of the loss of a potato crop, or the burning of a hay-stack or a stable ; and thus goes *the great indispensable* to all " true religion." It is a solemn mockery !

Who ever knew a christian to speak with pleasure upon the subject of everlasting misery on the bed of death ? His mind, thank God, dwells on other and better themes. His eye is fixed on heaven, and his heart swells with the love of God. The grace of God, and the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus, are his song, and his meditation. And here, too, rests the Universalist, under the shadow of the same wing, and on the same " everlasting arms ;" but to his favored soul they are still broader and more secure, for they embrace and shield the whole world ; and he is able to say here what he expects to sing hereafter with the ransomed universe, " O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?"

I admire one of your concluding remarks. I doubt not it came from the heart, and is in fact the real foundation of half the orthodoxy in the land. " The true christian [i. e. the believer in endless misery] is *safe*, even if Universalism be *true* ; but the Universalist is *lost* forever if his doctrine be *false*." This is not quite as clear as demonstration. Indeed, I see no reason why a Universalist must be lost forever, even if Universalism is not true. But I will not now stop to dispute the point. I only wished to say that in the quotation just made from you, we recognize the " ruling principle" of the orthodox world. The great question is not, what is *true*, but what is *safe* ; not what has God *revealed*, but what is *good policy* to believe. The practical inference is, Let us believe in endless misery ; and if after all, Universalism should prove true,

we shall be saved even as others ! Perhaps I am altogether in the wrong, but I cannot avoid the conviction that God has made it our duty to seek for TRUTH, and to know and walk in it. And the way of truth is the only path of safety. The orthodox world has merely reversed the order established by God, and is looking primarily for safety, which it hopes to secure by its own *good policy* ; while TRUTH is left as a matter of comparative insignificance. " But wisdom is justified of all her children."

I have now finished my task. Whether it has been well or ill done, I leave my readers to decide. I have devoted more time and attention to the review of these lectures than I had intended, and far more than they deserve. For none know so well as Mr. Remington and myself, what a strange medley, what a collection of scraps and fragments these lectures are ! It may seem to some, perhaps, that I have been severe, yet I am confident that those who know the circumstances of the case, will not thus judge me. The provocation has been great. When ignorance puts on the garb of learning, and truth is sacrificed to an overweening love of mastery ; when all the christian graces are forgotten in the indulgence of malicious and unsparing abuse ; and pretensions of uncommon piety and experimental godliness are set up for the purpose of giving point and edge to the foulest slander, I deem it time for some one to administer the much needed reproof : and Mr. Remington may congratulate himself that he has fallen into so gentle hands as mine. Throughout these letters I have endeavored to keep in mind the great truth that *mercy* is better than *sacrifice*.

And now, sir, may God of his infinite goodness bless you, by giving you a higher love and a fuller view of the truth as it is in Jesus, and finally bring you, with the whole human family, to enjoy and praise Him forever.

I am your friend and well wisher in the gospel.

THOMAS J. SAWYER.

(2)

PENALTY OF SIN;

A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN THE ORCHARD ST. (UNIVERSALIST) CHURCH
ON SUNDAY EVENING, FEB. 26, 1837,

IN REPLY TO

A SERMON AGAINST UNIVERSALISM,

DELIVERED IN THE BROOME ST. (PRESBYTERIAN) CHURCH
ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, FEB. 15, 1837,
BY REV. EDWIN F. HATFIELD.

BY T. J. SAWYER,
PASTOR OF THE ORCHARD ST. CHURCH.

"The wages of Sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through
Jesus Christ our Lord."

NEW YORK:
UNIVERSALIST UNION PRESS, 130 FULTON STREET.
.....
1839.

and may we come to the investigation of the subject before us with that spirit of candor and prayerfulness which its importance obviously demands, and which God is generally pleased to guide and bless. Let us lay aside our prejudices, and going with becoming docility to the oracles of God, let us endeavour dispassionately to examine, and frankly to receive what they teach.

THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.

There is no reason to doubt that by *death* the Apostle here expresses *the penalty of sin*. In doing so he speaks in accordance with the established custom of the sacred writers. God was pleased to attach to his first prohibitory command the penalty of death. When he had placed man in the garden, he said to him, Gen. ii. 17. "Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." One of the prophets also says, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. xviii. 3. It is in obvious conformity to this mode of expression that the Apostle speaks in our text. But since there is more than one kind of death mentioned in the Scriptures, the word is ambiguous, and it therefore becomes necessary for us to determine its meaning in the various places where it occurs, either from the connexion in which it stands, or by an appeal to other and more definite passages of the divine word.

I have said that there is more than one kind of death spoken of in the scriptures. Christians generally believe in three. The *first* is called *natural or temporal* death, by which is meant the cessation of animal life, or the dissolution of the soul and body. The *second* is called *moral or spiritual* death, and is defined to be a deprivation of spiritual life, or a state of ignorance, insensibility and disobedience to the divine commands, in which an individual, though living a natural life, is still "dead in trespasses and sins." The *third* and last kind is generally called *eternal* death. This, according to Christian Stock, a celebrated German divine of the last century is "the deprivation of eternal life, which was lost by Adam, and regained by the sufferings and death of

Jesus Christ." Lactantius says that eternal death is the feeling of everlasting pain, or the suffering of eternal torments.* But perhaps it will be sufficient to say that in the common acceptation of the phrase, it means simply *endless misery in hell*.

It was before observed that *death* is used by the sacred penmen to express the penalty of the divine law. Prof. Stuart in his Commentary on Romans, under ch. v. verse 12, after speaking of the extent of meaning in which the word death is used in the scriptures, says, "that the *usus loquendi*,† then *permits* DEATH to be construed as designating the *penalty of sin*, yea the *whole* penalty, there can be no good ground of doubt. The only question now is, whether death is employed in this sense in the passage before us? The antithesis in verses 15, 17, 21, and vi. 23, as produced above, would seem to go far toward a final settlement of this question. Indeed, there is no *philological* escape from the conclusion that death in the sense of penalty for sin, must be regarded as the meaning of the writer here."‡ So also Mr. Barnes speaks of death in our text, as expressing "the proper reward of sin," what the sinner "deserves," and "just what was threatened." That is, it includes in its meaning the penalty of sin, and as Prof. Stuart says, "the *whole* penalty." In the same manner Prof. Hodge on Romans v. 12, says "The death here spoken of is not mere natural death, but the penalty of the law, or the evils threatened as the punishment of sin."

This being conceded on all sides, it will be observed that the whole controversy between Universalists and

* Institut. divin. lib. ii. c. 13. Gregory is rather paradoxical in his definition of eternal death, for he says, Moral. lib. vi. c. 39, "it is death without death, because the sufferer dies and yet does not die." Bernard is still worse. "It is," says he, Meditat. devotiss. c. 3, "a mortal life and an immortal death, a death of the life and of the soul; when one so dies that he lives forever, and so lives that he dies forever."

† By the *usus loquendi* is meant, the sense which usage attaches to the words in any language.

‡ What is here said, applies with equal force to our text, which Prof. Stuart regards as a parallel passage.

Limitarians is virtually reduced to this simple question, What is the meaning of the word *death* in the passage under consideration and its kindred passages? Does it, or does it not denote "eternal death?" If it does, then the popular doctrine of endless misery *may** be true. If it does not, then that doctrine cannot be a doctrine of Revelation, and is entitled to no credit whatever.

It is not singular, then, that great efforts should be made to affix the meaning of eternal death to the word as it occurs in our text, which to say the least, affords as fair an opportunity for introducing such a definition as is to be found in the word of God. If it cannot be sustained here, it cannot, I believe, be sustained in any other passage of the Bible. Hence it follows that if our text is given up by the advocates of endless misery, that darling tenet must be abandoned, unless indeed some other passage more favorable to the purpose, and hitherto unnoticed, should be discovered. In the examination of the subject, however, which I now propose, I shall endeavour to bring into view the principal texts of Scripture upon which reliance is placed by the believers in the doctrine of eternal death.

Let us now proceed to inquire, What is the meaning of the word *death* in our text? In opposition to the views of the majority of Christians in this community, I shall first endeavour to prove that it is not "eternal death;" afterwards it will be my object to show what the true scriptural meaning of the word is.

I. The wages of sin is not eternal death. This I think will appear from the consideration of the several reasons assigned in support of that opinion. The chief argument in favor of the popular exposition of the passage, is drawn from the circumstance that *death* is contrasted

* I say, *may* be true; perhaps I should say *must* be true, and not in one case, or a thousand, or a million, but in all. But is the prevailing opinion concerning means being provided by which God can clear the guilty, and crown with eternal life those who deserve eternal death, be adopted, then my expression is proper; because the desert of endless misery furnishes no proof that it will be suffered. And if justice can be set aside in one case, why may it not in every case? So that while all men deserve endless misery, no one, perhaps, shall suffer it.

with *eternal life*. This contrast occurs in substance two or three times in the connexion, and also in the parallel passages. In chap. v. verse 15, "death" stands opposed to "the grace of God and the gift by grace." In verse 17, it stands opposed to "abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness." And in verse 21, as well as in our text and the two preceding verses, it stands opposed to "everlasting" or "eternal life." On this circumstance great stress is laid. The Rev. Mr. Barnes in his Notes on Romans, speaking on the phrase "everlasting life," (chap. vi. verse 22,) says, "This stands in contrast with the word *death*, and shows its meaning. *One is just as long in duration as the other*; if one is limited the other is. If those who *obey* shall be blessed with life forever, those who *disobey* will be cursed with death forever. Never was there an antithesis more manifest and more clear. And there could not be a stronger proof that the word *death* in verse 21, refers not to temporal death, but to eternal punishment." Again, on our text, he says, "eternal life is opposed to death: and proves incontestably that that means eternal death." Professor Stuart takes the same ground and rests his interpretation of the passage solely on this contrast.

A careful examination of the subject, will show, it is believed, that the confidence reposed upon this circumstance is either wholly misplaced, or in a great measure undeserved. The ground seems to me altogether too unstable to rear a doctrine upon of such magnitude and of such momentous consequences to the human race, as that of endless misery. Are we not justified in expecting some clearer revelation of this horrible doom than is to be found in the passage before us?

It is undoubtedly the nature of *antithesis* to present two objects or ideas which are opposed to each other, in contrast, that their opposition may be more striking, and that the general effect may be greatly heightened. It is also true, that when we comprehend one of the ideas it enables us easily to understand the other which is opposed to it, at least in the point or points wherein the

opposition consists.* But it should never be forgotten that there may be, and very often is, an opposition between two objects or ideas in one respect, that is, in one point of view, and yet not in all respects. It is the neglect of this obvious and certainly important consideration, which has, I conceive, involved the authors just now referred to, in a most appalling error. They assume that since *death* is contrasted with *eternal life*, it must therefore mean *eternal death*. "One is just as long in duration," says Mr. Barnes, "as the other, and if one is limited the other is."

Let us for a moment adopt this principle of interpretation and explain in strict accordance with it the very passage under consideration. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here it will be perceived are three pairs of antithetic terms. 1. Wages is contrasted with gift. 2. Sin is contrasted with God. 3. Death is contrasted with eternal life. In the last case Mr. Barnes says that "eternal life stands in contrast with death, and shows its meaning—it is opposed to death and proves incontestably that that means eternal death—there could not be a stronger proof that the word death refers not to temporal death, but to eternal punishment." Let us apply this reasoning to the other antithetical terms which are before us. Sin, it may be observed, is "here spoken of as a person,"† as a tyrannical king, or cruel master, and is contrasted with God, the supreme and gracious Ruler of the universe. Now since God stands opposed to sin we are enabled to determine its meaning. One is just as long in duration and just as great as the other. But since we know God is infinite and eternal, this manifest antithesis proves incontestably

* "When ideas are repugnant to each other, if you understand one, of course you understand the other which is the opposite, (for what one asserts the other denies;) so in antithetic language whether the subject or the predicate of a sentence, the rule is obvious that the interpretation of one must be directed by that of the other."—*Stuart's Ernesti*.

† *Locke on Romans*, vi. 11.

bly that sin is so likewise. There could not be a stronger proof of the fact.

This, it must be confessed, is rather a startling conclusion, but I hope our interpreters of antithesis will not complain. We have now proved not only that death means eternal death, but also that sin is equal to God, equal in eternity and power.*

But we have not yet done. Our text furnishes us with other marvels. The gift of God it must be remembered is contrasted with the wages of sin, and manifestly shows its meaning. It is as clear as sunlight that God has given to man nothing more, only it is of an opposite character, than man has himself earned of sin. Man has merited endless and unspeakable misery; God gives him endless and unspeakable happiness. Whether this doctrine is calculated to magnify the grace of God I shall leave others to determine for themselves. It certainly exalts sufficiently the human powers to work evil, though it represents them as feeble to do good. But the grace of God through Jesus Christ is barely equal to reverse the mischief which man had done himself. All this we learn from this method of interpreting contrasts. And I hope my readers are satisfied, that if the principle in question can be applied in one of these cases; it may, or rather, it must, in all. If death must denote eternal death because it is contrasted with eternal life, sin must mean something that is infinite and eternal because contrasted with the eternal and infinite God, and the wages of sin must in all respects be equal to the gift of God through Jesus Christ, because it is contrasted with it.

Perhaps a little more discrimination in explaining scripture would have saved the world some errors, and tended not only to the advancement of knowledge, but also of happiness. In the first antithesis which occurs here, *wages* is opposed to *gift*. Wages is the just reward, or stipulated compensation for services rendered.

* If death is eternal, sin, which is at once the cause and sting of death, must be so likewise. And if popular theology be true, sin has a fair prospect of dividing with God the empire of the universe forever.

Gift, on the contrary, is something unmerited, a boon of unpurchased favor. These two words are therefore beautifully contrasted here.

But he who should attempt to prove from this contrast, that *the gift of God* is to be measured by *the wages of sin*, or that they are precisely equal to each other, obviously undertakes a hopeless task, and one, too, which should he succeed, would sink the power of the Almighty to do good to the level of human powers to do evil, or what is equally derogatory to the divine character, it would exalt man to an infinity which God exclusively claims. So in the second antithesis, *sin* is contrasted with *God*. The opposition lies in this, that *sin* is in its nature and influence unfriendly to the interests and happiness of man, while *God* is at once man's Father and best friend. *God* is *holy*: *sin* is the reverse. *God* is good and perfectly good, *sin* is evil and evil only. Here the contrast ends, and to suppose that because *sin* is opposed here to *God* it must therefore be equal to Him, in all respects, would appear little short of insanity. Again: in the last antithesis *death* is opposed to *eternal life*, but the contrast here exists in the opposite natures of death and life, while the qualifying word *eternal* is introduced in connexion with the latter to show that "the gift of God" surpasses indefinitely, perhaps I should say infinitely, "the wages of sin."

It appears to me that the Apostle studied to express himself in this strongly antithetical passage in such a way that he could not easily be misunderstood. For this purpose all the terms in the first member of the sentence are taken in an obviously lower sense than those of the second; so that while in one point of view there is a striking antithesis, we see its effect greatly heightened by the almost infinite disparity which exists between the ideas of which it is composed. The objects contrasted are indeed opposite in their nature, but by no means equal in their extent or magnitude. On the one side stand *sin*, *wages*, *death*; on the other, *God*, *gift*,* *eternal life*. To pretend that these terms

* *Free gift*, or as Dr. Macknight renders it "gracious gift."

are correspondingly equal is more than I am willing to think any unprejudiced mind can do. Indeed the judgment must be sadly biased by a creed before such an idea could be for a moment indulged. And yet all this must be pretended and believed, or else this passage must be given up as furnishing no proof of the doctrine of endless misery.

If I have now succeeded in showing that death does not necessarily denote "eternal death" because it is in a few instances contrasted with "eternal life," I have accomplished all that I designed and all that is required. For, I may repeat that it is on the interpretation of this antithesis that the popular doctrine of eternal death is left ultimately to rest. If this fail, as I think I have shown it must, that doctrine must fall to the ground. But whatever may have been my success, I may with the best reason affirm that the confidence, which seems to be reposed on this circumstance of contrast, is undue and even extravagant. Are we indeed required to believe the horrible dogma of eternal death or endless misery upon so slight grounds as that which I have been examining? Can it be possible that our heavenly Father when he condescended to make us a revelation of his will, left us to infer our imminent danger of suffering unspeakable and never-ending torments in hell-fire, from an antithesis like this? The thought is awful, and I cannot but regard it as a reflection upon the divine character too blasphemous in its nature to be innocently indulged. Who, I ask, that had no system to support, would ever find the doctrine of endless misery in our text? And who that had better proof of that doctrine at hand, would ever assert that the antithesis in the text proves incontestably that death here means eternal death? The very efforts that are made to force this passage into the support of endless misery, is an invincible argument against the doctrine. For had it been clearly revealed, as such a doctrine certainly would have been had it been true, its advocates would not have been driven to the miserable attempt, the forlorn hope, of defending it here. That cause must be desperate indeed, which leaves its friends no better pros-

pects of success, than this text affords the believers in interminable wretchedness. "In the things which concern our eternal salvation," says Dr. Clarke,* "we need the most *pointed* and *express evidence*, on which to establish the faith of our souls." And surely if there is a doctrine of revelation which demands such evidence, it must be the one under consideration. But does our text, or any other text in the oracles of God, furnish us with "the most *pointed* and *express evidence*" that the Ruler of the universe threatens the human race with eternal death or endless misery? Who has the hardihood to pretend it? or rather I should say who has the ability to prove it? Let him answer who can. I fearlessly assert that such a threatening is not to be found in the volume of the Holy Scriptures, and I would challenge the world to the proof.

I might here dismiss this part of my subject and leave my readers to form their own conclusions; but we sometimes see an appeal made to other passages of scripture in which the word death occurs, in order to support the popular interpretation of our text. It may therefore be proper to consider one or two of them and ascertain whether they give any countenance to the doctrine of eternal death.

The first passage to which I shall invite your attention, is found in Ezekiel xviii. 31. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Is it pretended that the question here really is, why will ye die an eternal death? In this way many commentators explain it. "Why should you go to *hell*," says Dr. Clarke, in his notes on these words, "while the kingdom of God is open to receive you? * * * Why will ye die? *DIE!* What is this? A separation from God and the glory of his power forever! *DIE*,—forfeiting all the purposes for which your immortal souls were made. *DIE*, to know what the *worm* is that *never dieth*; and what that fire is that is *never quenched*?"

* Note on Matt. v. 27.

It is worthy of remark here that this passage says nothing of eternal death, and if it means that, that meaning must be inferred; and it must be obvious to every mind that an inference must be *proved* before it is entitled to belief. It would not, therefore, have been a work of supererogation in Dr. Clarke, and I may include many others with him, to have offered at least one reason for the justness of his view of the subject. But what Dr. Clarke neglected to do, I have seen undertaken by other hands, not less competent perhaps for *this* task than his. Indeed in a work of mere *assertion*, learning and talents are by no means an indispensable requisite.

It has been said that the prophet must have spoken of eternal death in the passage before us, because he could not have used these words in reference to either *temporal* or *spiritual* death. He could not have spoken of spiritual death, because the Jews whom he addressed were already dead in trespasses and sin, that is they were already spiritually dead. To ask them why they would die such a death, would have been "nonsense!" Again, it could not have been temporal death, because all men, good and bad, must die in this sense, nor can any hope by repentance or righteousness to escape it. To ask the Jews why they would die a natural or temporal death would have been absurd! Therefore it must have been eternal death. Why will ye die—why will ye DIE AN ETERNAL DEATH? Or as Dr. Clarke says, "why will ye go to *hell*?"

Let us examine this reasoning. Where then is the absurdity in supposing the prophet to speak of spiritual death? Spiritual death, like sin, is capable of being indefinitely increased, in proportion as the individual is more and more estranged from God and the life that he requires. We have no reason to suppose that this estrangement was total in the Jews whom the prophet here addressed, even if it were allowed to be so in any man whatever in the present state. If then they were capable of sinning farther, they were liable to farther spiritual death; and there was no impropriety in calling to them, "why will ye die;" why will you continue

we in your present state of death and be constantly aggravating your guilt and your misery? But again; where is the absurdity in supposing the prophet to speak here of temporal death? True, all men must die this death. What then, is it never threatened as a punishment for violating laws both human and divine? Who can be so ignorant as not to know that under perhaps every government on the globe, temporal death is regarded as the severest punishment which can be inflicted: and this, too, while every human being is well aware that he must die. Would it be "nonsense" then should we see a man about to commit murder or any other crime, the penalty of which is temporal death, to cry out to him, why will you die? And what should we think of that professed minister of the gospel, who should exclaim in our ears, "Nonsense, nonsense, do you not know that all men must die?" Yet this would be no more ridiculous or absurd than the reasoning which we are now examining. To say that the prophet could not have used these words in reference to temporal death because all men are mortal, is plainly to contradict not only the common sense, but the universal practice of mankind, and to charge God, moreover, with folly, who ordained that many classes of transgressors under the Mosaic religion, should suffer this punishment. A premature, violent and ignominious death inflicted for crime, has always been regarded both by God and man, as the greatest punishment that mortals can suffer; and there is therefore no reason in the world why the prophet could not and did not here speak of temporal death. And until some reason of this kind can be advanced, it is wholly a gratuitous assumption that would interpret his language to mean eternal death.

By examining the whole chapter from which this passage is selected, it will be seen that the prophet is discoursing exclusively upon things pertaining to this world and that no allusion is made to the future. It seems that the Jews then in captivity at Babylon complained that they were made to suffer the punishment of their fathers' sins. "The fathers," said they, "have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

To this complaint it was replied that there should be no more occasion for this proverb in Israel. "Behold," said God, "all souls* are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth it shall die." What death was here spoken of will perhaps be evident by considering the 13th verse; "he shall not live; he hath done all these abominations: he shall surely die, *his blood shall be upon him*." He shall die, "that is," says Grotius, "he shall die a premature death," or as Menochius explains it, "he shall suffer death as the punishment of his sins."

The whole chapter does not furnish a particle of proof that the prophet here alluded in the remotest manner to eternal death.† Besides, the remark might be worthy of the attention of Limitarians generally, that neither Moses nor the prophets were so familiar with the idea of eternal death, as clergymen, the least informed, now seem to be. Indeed it has been asserted by learned and orthodox men that the law of Moses never appeals for motives to the future world. Dr. Jahn‡ says, "We have not authority decidedly to say that any other motives were held out to the ancient Hebrews to pursue the good and to avoid the evil, than those which were derived from the rewards and punishments of this life."

With what show of reason then, is it pretended that the prophet here spoke of endless misery? Who will

* Let not the unlearned reader be misled by the use of the word *soul* here. "A very slight inspection of the original scriptures," says Prof. Bush, Treat. on Millenn. p. 185, "will evince that the sense ordinarily affixed to the English word *soul*, implying a disembodied immaterial spirit, by no means answers to the predominant import of either the Hebrew *nephesh*, or the Greek *psuche*. In the usage of the sacred writers its leading sense is that of *persons*." The passage before us then might be read, "all *persons*, all *men* are mine, as the Father so also the Son."

† Grotius says, "the time of the gospel being now approaching, God wished his justice to appear more exact, and therefore would destroy all the wicked with famine, pestilence and the sword, cause those less evil to die in captivity, and restore the righteous, made free, to their native land." Such seems to be this author's view of this chapter.

‡ Biblical Archaeology 3314.

attempt to prove that Ezekiel ever uttered a word, nay that he had ever heard a word of such punishment? No man qualified for the task will be likely to undertake it.

Another passage appealed to for the same purpose as the one just now considered, is found in Rev. xx. 14. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." It might seem that a phrase so ambiguous as this, and occurring in a book so figurative and obscure as the Apocalypse, might be exempted from rendering service to the cause of endless misery! Not so however. This phrase is regarded as one of the chief supports of that popular dogma. That it means "eternal death," commentators and divines have assumed and asserted time out of mind, and it seems to be thought advisable never to call that interpretation in question. Hence Matthew Henry says, "it is the death of the soul, eternal separation from God." Dr. Clarke tells us that "by second death soul and body are destroyed through eternity." Dr. Bloomfield says, "it is the damnation of Gehenna, *hell*, properly so called." And even Prof. Stuart seems to acquiesce in this interpretation of the phrase.

Would it not be well for some one competent to the task, seriously to undertake to *prove* what has been so long and so generally assumed? Is it not time that some effort should be made to place the common interpretation of this phrase on a more substantial basis than it has hitherto occupied? But where is the man who will engage in this important work? I fear it will be long before we shall see him.

It has been, and may well be, doubted whether any part of the Apocalypse relates to the future and eternal world. Wetstein and Herder appear to have regarded the book of Revelation as relating particularly to the destruction of Jerusalem, the fate of Judaism connected therewith, and the ascendancy of Christianity. Bossuet and Calmet think it extends to the conquest of Rome by Alaric, king of the Goths. Grotius regards the first part as relating to the affairs of the Jews, from the twelfth to the end of the twentieth chapters to the Romans, and the remainder of the book to the flourishing

state of the Christian church. Herrenschnneider has shown that the mystical cities Sodom and Babylon, denote Jerusalem and Rome, the fortunes of which constitute the greater portion of the Apocalypse and that they are only symbols of two religions, Judaism and heathenism, the downfall of which are predicted; while the third city, the new Jerusalem, which appears at the close of the book, denotes the reign of the blessed. Hug, to whose Introduction I am indebted for these facts, adopts materially the views of Herrenschnneider, but shows very conclusively that the new Jerusalem denotes not the kingdom of the blessed after this life, but Christianity here in this world. "It was only as a religion," says he, "that it could descend to earth to supply the place of the two religions which were to be destroyed."

"It is no objection to this opinion," he adds, "that the graves are first opened and the dead restored to life. The resurrection of the dead which is here mentioned is only one of those strong, terrific images sometimes employed by the prophets to denote a total change of affairs, the revival of national prosperity and of the religious constitution of the Jews. Ez. xxxvii; Isa. xxxvi. 19.

"And as to the circumstance that a day of judgment is connected therewith, we know that this too, was made use of figuratively by the prophets, to denote the execution of punishment upon those who oppressed and ill treated the people of God, or to express God's purpose of bringing about a new epoch of glory for his religion and people." Joel iii. 2, seq. Zeph. iii. 8, seq. See also Dan. vii. 9, 11.

If this view of the Apocalypse be correct, and it is undoubtedly entitled to equal consideration with any other, since it is sustained by as great names, and as numerous and weighty facts, it follows that the phrase, *the second death*, can with no propriety whatever be referred to the eternal world, and consequently cannot mean "eternal death." But even could the opinion of Hug be shown to be incorrect, it by no means follows that the popular acceptance of this phrase can be sustained. Indeed the Rev. Mr. Bush, Professor of the Hebrew language in the New York University, says,

* This expression (*the second death*) is not perhaps susceptible of an explication so clear and satisfactory as could be desired. It is a phrase of Rabbinic rather than of scriptural origin, and is evidently used to denote some fearful kind of punishment to be inflicted upon transgressors whose guilt was of a deep die, in some anticipated state called by them 'the world to come.' But until we have been enabled to learn with more precision, than has yet been practicable, the real sense affixed by Jewish writers to the phrase 'world to come,' we must remain in a great measure ignorant of the exact import of the expression *second death*.*

With this quotation I leave this passage to the judgment of my readers, barely adding the remark, that had there not been an imperious necessity for employing this phrase in the support of endless misery it would in all probability never have been quoted, much less insisted on, as it generally has been, for so unnatural a purpose.

Having now considered some of the most prominent passages usually adduced for the support of the dogma of "eternal death," and seen that they neither express nor imply that idea, I think we are justified in concluding that it was never threatened as the penalty of any law, and consequently makes no part of divine revelation.

II. But if eternal death is not the penalty of the law, in what sense is the word death in our text to be taken? Is it merely *temporal*, or is it *spiritual* death? Pelagius and others have thought that it was the latter, and very many commentators, and "among them," as Professor Stuart confesses, "some highly respected ones," contend for the former.

But upon a careful examination it will be seen that by both classes the word has been taken in too narrow a sense. The fundamental idea of the word death is undoubtedly *temporal death*, but as all agree, it soon came to be used with considerable latitude of meaning. Hence it is employed both by the Old and New Tes-

* "Treatise on the Millennium," p. 202.

† "It is observable," says Dr. Macknight, in his note on our text, "that although in scripture the expression *eternal life* is often to be met with, we no where find *eternal* joined with *death*."

tament writers in the sense of *destruction, ruin, adversity, misery*. Prof. Tholuck on Rom. v. 12 says, that "LIFE in the Old Testament denotes *the aggregate of all good*, and DEATH, *of all evil*." "Death," says Prof. Hodge on the same passage, "means the evil, or any evil, which is inflicted in punishment of sin." Dr. Lowth adopts the same opinion. He says, Commentary on Ezekiel xviii. 4, "as *life* signifies in general all that happiness which attends God's favor, so *death* denotes all those punishments which are the effects of the divine displeasure." Prof. Stuart and others might be quoted to the same purpose, but these are sufficient. Taking the word *death* in this acceptation, it will be seen that it expresses not merely one specifick kind of evil, as temporal or spiritual death, but it includes all the various evils which are consequent upon sin. That any of these evils are endless the scriptures do not teach, and of course it can never be proved.

We are now prepared to inquire more particularly what the penalty of sin is, or in other words, what are the evils which God inflicts upon the sinner. The first instance which occurs to throw light on the subject is the case of the parents of our race. God had said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt *surely die*." It is very important to observe that the penalty here threatened did not belong to the eternal world as has often been imagined. It was not to be reserved to the termination of natural life, or the general resurrection of the dead, but was to be inflicted on the very *day* of transgression; "in the day thou eatest thereof." Nor was the penalty threatened in such a manner that it might be inflicted or not. Never were words more express or positive. "Thou shalt *SURELY die*." This expression, according to Prof. Stuart, "denotes assurance, certainty." Drusius explains it thus: "Thou shalt *certainly* and *immediately* die."

Our first parents sinned. Was the penalty inflicted, and inflicted on the day of transgression? * To question

* "From the sacred volume," says Dr. Schmucker, "we learn that when they had transgressed, God inflicted on them the threatened penalty."

this is to question the veracity of God, and to doubt whether the Almighty or the serpent spoke the truth! But what were the effects of this sin? The first effect was that their eyes "were opened, and they knew that they were naked." As Matthew Henry says, "Shame and fear seized the criminals, *ipso facto—in the fact itself*; these came into the world along with sin, and still attend it." And these were greatly increased when in the cool of the day they "heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden;" for "they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord." Here was spiritual death; here was misery. But the threatening of the Lord was sure. The day was not past and they heard the voice of their Governor and Judge. Though naked, and burning with shame, and trembling with fear, they must come forth, and hear their doom. What was it? Let us answer in the words of inspiration: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Afterwards man was driven from the garden, and his return thither prevented.

Thus end the words God addressed to Adam and Eve, the first sinners. And who can pretend to find a lip of eternal death here? There is manifestly no allusion to such a punishment. Is it then to be assumed that when God said, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" the idea of *eternal death* was included as a part of the penalty? But if eternal death was not threatened to our first parents to whom has it been threatened? Prof. Stuart says, "If Adam's first sin was a *real sin*, and a *fortiori*, if it was one of the greatest

of all sins, (as we surely have much reason to conclude when we consider its consequences,) then death in its* *extensive* sense must have been the penalty attached to it. What reason can be given, why other sins less than his are punishable with *death* in the enlarged sense of this word, and yet that the sin of Adam was not punishable in the like way? Was he not even the more culpable who fell from a state of entire holiness?" True; but will Prof. Stuart be so good as to point us to a word, a hint the most obscure, by which the death threatened Adam can be shown to mean eternal death? He cannot do it; no man on earth can do it. If God may be allowed to be his own interpreter, Adam was not threatened with endless misery as the consequence of sin; at least no intimation of such a penalty is ever given.

But what, it will be asked, was the penalty of his sin? Read the third chapter of Genesis and learn. Man was filled with shame and fear; he was deprived of his innocence and fell from his happy estate; he was doomed to sorrow and travail and disappointment. I must make one quotation more from Prof. Stuart: "The curse

* Mr. Barnes, with a new and admirable logic, contends that although the threatening of death made to Adam involved the idea of eternal death, still this notion never entered, and could not have entered, into the mind of Adam! In the course of four thousand years, however, this idea became fully *developed*; and St. Paul *clearly* taught the doctrine of eternal death, though as ill luck will have it, he used precisely the same words that God had used to Adam. In Mr. Barnes' opinion Adam understood by death, "nothing more than the loss of life," that is, natural death. "Indeed," says he, "there is the highest evidence that the case admits of, that this *was* his understanding of it. For in the account of the *infliction* of the penalty after the law was violated, in God's own interpretation of it in Gen. iii. 19, there is still no reference to any thing further." It would be gratifying to have Mr. Barnes show the *fair dealing* in this case. He confesses that Adam did not and could not have understood the threatening to include eternal death, and that even "in God's own interpretation of it there is no reference" to such an evil; and yet it was there! Was Adam then made the subject of an *ex post facto* law, that is, was there an infinitely greater penalty attached to the law *after* its violation, and to which he was subjected, than had existed before? Or did the Deity deceive Adam by threatening him with temporal death, and punishing him with eternal death? In either case the penalty is obviously unjust.

here pronounced on man," says he, "involved the idea that henceforth the earth was to become much less fruitful than before, and also that it was to produce such shrubs and weeds, as would much retard his labor for sustenance and render it more painful and difficult. 'The sweat of his brow' by which his bread was to be procured, indicates strenuous labor and exertion. So far as all these things were painful, and occasioned inconvenience and disappointment, I consider them as much a part of the penalty (*thou shalt surely die*) as the 'returning to dust,' which is mentioned in the last part of verse 14. Why these should so often be separated from each other, as they have been by many critics and divines, it is difficult to see. They stand connected so obviously, that I cannot persuade myself that they do not make *one totality*. If so, then *death* does not mean merely *the dissolution of our physical bodies*, but every kind of pain, sorrow and inconvenience. That such may be the meaning of the word here, the common usage of the Old and New Testament clearly shows." Hebrew Christomathy, pp. 143, 144.

Misery, evil, both mental and physical, is the penalty of sin, and, as Professor Hodge well observes, "the amount of this evil is different no doubt in every different case of transgression." God the righteous Judge who sees the heart, will reward every man according to his works. But death is the common term by which this penalty is, in the scriptures, expressed. Hence Moses said to the children of Israel, Deut. xxx: 5. "See, I have set before thee this day, *life* and *good*, and *death*, and *evil*." "Death and evil," says Bishop Patrick, "may be but two words for one thing, viz. all manner of misery which he had set at large before them in the xxviii. chapter:—or *death* may signify their being cut off from the land of the living before their time; and *evil*, all the calamities he had threatened while they lived." But neither in the case of Adam nor of the Hebrews under Moses, was there any allusion to eternal death. Indeed, as I have before suggested, the Old Testament is confessed by many eminent divines to contain no hint of future rewards and punishments.

"In the Jewish Republic," says Bishop Warburton, Divine Legation of Moses, B. v. Works, vol. v. p. 159, "both rewards and punishments promised by Heaven were temporal only." "This dispensation," says Dr. Paley, Ser. xiii, "dealt altogether in temporal rewards and punishments." To these might be added, Grotius, Episcopus, Dr. Campbell and many others. "Many," says an English divine, "deny that the punishment of eternal death was implied in the sentence denounced against Adam. Among these are Bishop Burnet on the 9th Article; Dr. Burnett on the Articles; Dr. Hey in his Noreesian Lectures, and Mr. Ludlum in his Essays."

But if the doctrine of eternal death is not threatened in the Old Testament, who will undertake to prove that it was introduced into the world by Jesus Christ, the Mediator of a better covenant? For it may be observed that the same word was employed to designate the penalty of the law in the New, as had been used in the Old Testament. St. Paul tells us that "by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin." And as sin entered into *the world*, so also did death, the penalty of sin: it is here, and has "passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" and to suppose that the penalty of sin is exclusively or chiefly reserved till this world is no more, seems plainly to contradict the apostle's meaning. Nor should this be thought singular, for the same inspired writer tells us again, that "to be carnally-minded is *death*." He who gives himself up to the love and lusts of the world is *dead* while he lives; and though surrounded with all things, is still "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The beloved apostle confesses that he and his brethren had been in this state of condemnation and death. "We know," says he, "that we have passed from *death* unto *life*, because we love the brethren; he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." But let it be remembered that neither Moses nor the prophets, nor Jesus Christ himself, or his apostles, ever uttered a word relative to eternal death!

Besides, if all mankind have subjected themselves to the penalty of endless misery, it is a problem rather difficult to solve how God could give eternal life to

any, without forfeiting his word, or dishonouring his justice. "Thou shalt surely die" is still attached to the divine law, and as soon may we expect that God will deny himself as that he will fail to cause him "that doeth wrong to receive for the wrong which he hath done."

Our text is a most beautiful illustration of this truth. He who engages in the service of another is entitled to wages. Now the original word here rendered *wages* expresses a peculiar idea. It signifies "properly the *rations of soldiers*, i. e. their wages, which at first were paid in grain, meat, fruit, etc. but afterwards in money." The observation of Dr. Clarke is very appropriate here, "The word which we here render *wages*, signified the *daily pay* of a Roman soldier. So every sinner has a *daily pay*, and this pay is *death*; he has *miser*y because he sins. Sin constitutes hell: the sinner has a hell in his own bosom; all is *confusion* and *disorder* where God does not reign; every indulgence of sinful passions increases the disorder and consequently the misery of the sinner." Of all paymasters, sin is one of the most faithful. Its servants never go unrewarded, and their wages are never "kept back." Let the reader bear this constantly in mind, and when tempted to sin, let him remember that his wages are sure and that these wages are *death*!

But heaven be thanked, while "the wages of sin is *death*, the gift of God is ETERNAL LIFE, through Jesus Christ our Lord." For "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." I shall close in the language of one of the greatest lights of the Methodist Episcopal Church on these very words. "Thus we find, that the salvation from sin here is as extensive and complete as the *guilt* and *contamination* of sin, death is conquered, hell disappointed, the devil confounded, and sin totally destroyed. Here is glorying to him that hath loved and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests to God and his Father be glory and dominion for ever. Amen! Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen and Amen."



